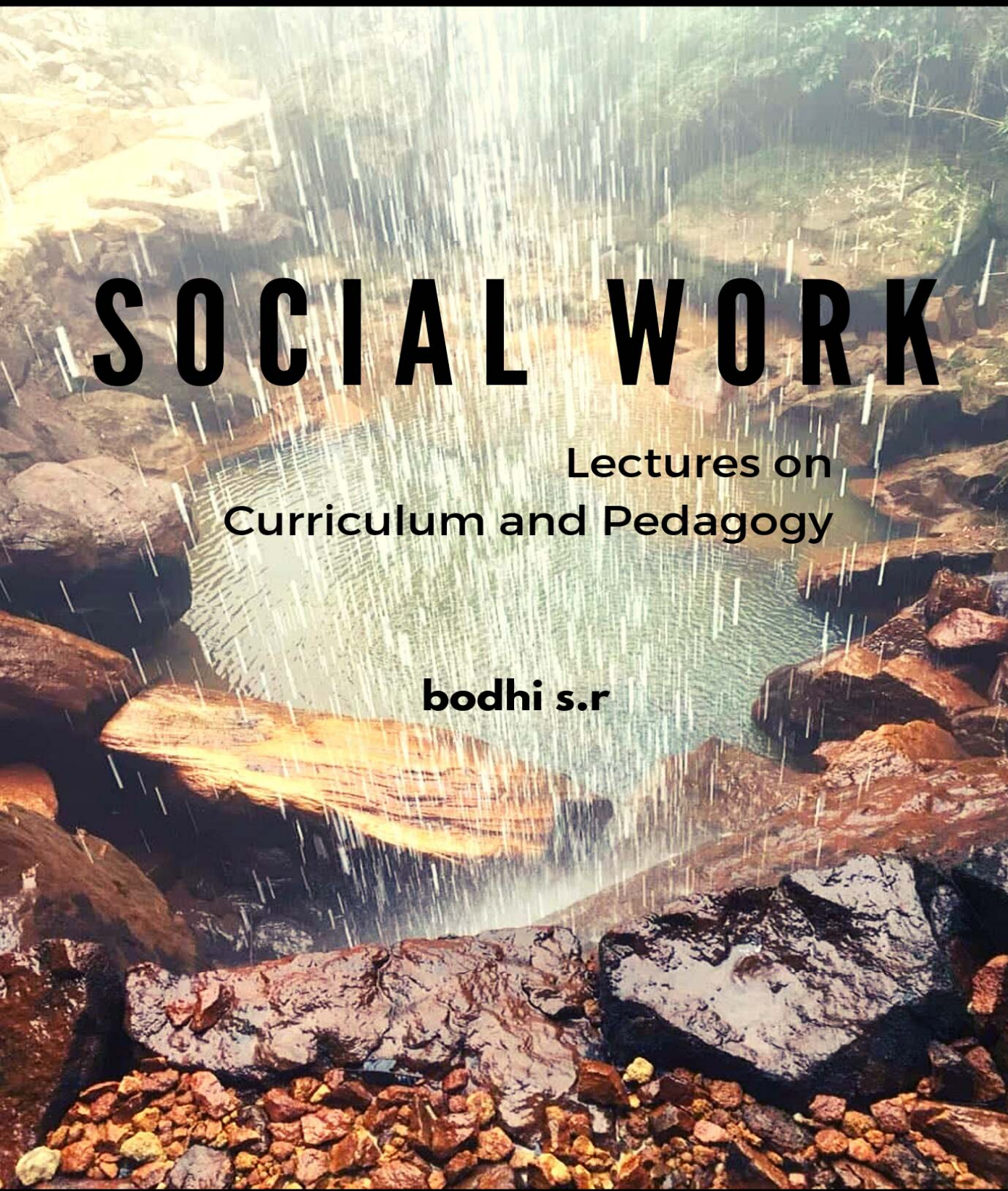

SOCIAL WORK

Lectures on Curriculum and Pedagogy

bodhi s.r

THE NEW VEHICLE

Social Work

Lectures
on
Curriculum and Pedagogy

by

bodhi s.r

THE NEW VEHICLE

Dedicated
to
Dalit & Tribal Students

The New Vehicle is an Imprint of the Insight Multipurpose Society (IMS). IMS is driven by a sincere desire to deepen people's theoretical engagement with meaning(s) and truth(s).

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EBook edition 2019: ISBN 978-81-942059-2-0

Published in India by Insight Multipurpose Society, Wardha, Maharashtra

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Forthcoming

Mangesh Dahiwale
THINKING THE NAVAYANA WAY

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THE FEDERATION OF KHASI STATES
HISTORY, EPISTEMOLOGY AND POLITICS

bodhi s.r and raile.r.ziipao (Ed)
LAND, WORDS AND RESILIENT CULTURES
THE ONTOLOGICAL BASIS OF TRIBAL IDENTITY

Foreword

Over the years, I have often held the view that social work needs to be more real both in theory and practice. Being an applied social science, it must arrive at its knowledge after deep study of social reality with perspectives and concerns for the most marginalized groups. Unfortunately this is something that I have not observed taking place.

Having taught the Master's programme in Tata Institute of Social Sciences and been party to the restructuring process of the social work programmes that took place in the TISS in the year 2004 onwards, there is still something amiss when it comes to social work facing this truth. The problematics of social work is that its educators seem fearful to identify what ails Indian society, are hesitant to diagnose it properly and shy away from formulating intervention models that would correctly treat the same.

In 1996, TISS organized a major conference to celebrate its 60th year as an Institute. A special volume on 'Towards a People Centered Development' was brought out. I had contributed an article titled 'The Plight of Dalits: A Challenge to Social Work Profession' to this volume. There I made few arguments with regards to the engagement of social work profession and professionals in addressing the 'caste question'. My claims in the article may be summarized as follows: Although the social work profession world over is rooted in the ideal of social justice, and accordingly emphasizes the need of making the excluded, exploited and the vulnerable understand how

they are exploited, who exploits them, and how the exploited can at least mitigate, if not prevent, such exploitation, using the legally recognized and humane means, the social work profession in India is primarily rooted in the religious doctrines. Some of these doctrines grounded around the ideas of caste, while preaching that the rich and the dominant communities and individuals should be sympathetic towards the poor and vulnerable ones, and undertake all possible measures to ameliorate their pitiable and pilloried condition, yet they still hold on to their beliefs of one caste being more superior to another. Such a theological position goes against the basic tenets of social work profession. Yet the professional social workers in India never questioned this unethical and immoral position of such doctrines.

I also argued that socialized in such beliefs, the social workers themselves are caste biased and therefore incapable of recognizing the problems faced by many fellow citizens who belong especially to the caste below in the hierarchy. Therefore, before resorting to deal with the issues of caste discrimination and brutalities that the Dalits face even today, it is imperative to first conscientize the Indian professional social workers to come out of their caste prejudices and embed themselves in a different state of civility.

Another assertion I made in the article is that the existing social work methods such as *case work*, *group work*, *community organization* and *social action* are applied only to deal with other issues such as health, education, issues of the

physically and mentally challenged, orphans and destitute, prisoners, youth and children, and of late issues of women's empowerment. Not so surprisingly, these methods are hardly used to deal with issues of caste-based prejudices, discriminations and violence. Therefore, I argued not only for an alternative conception of social work methods suitable for dealing with caste related issues, but also for our willingness as professional social workers to evolve efficacious social work methods and apply them to address caste related problems effectively.

From these minor interventions in the 1990s to the current programme in the TISS, social work education has come a long way. There is a greater degree of acceptance of the complexity of the Indian conditions and an attempt to engage with the same. Some of the issues that were invisibilised from social work education since its inception have now come to occupy central space in both teaching and intervention. This is definitely a paradigm shift for social work and something that I personally appreciate.

This book which attempts to capture these shifts in social work education and in its curriculum is a wonderful read and is on the same line as my own thought process. It is both insightful and full of information about how these twist and turns of conscientization took place through the years within the discipline. It touches upon various themes in curriculum formation beginning with social work history, basic social work concepts, pedagogy, methods and the new emerging ideas in social work education.

I personally have not seen nor laid my hands on a book in social work that engages so deeply with curriculum and pedagogy. While social work educators are, in my opinion, one of the most creative among teachers in the social sciences, and the social work discipline being the most innovative, having to engage with both a field of inquiry and field of practice together, there is however very less writings on the subject of curriculum formulations and pedagogical strategies.

I am so happy to see the production of this text at this moment, a text that is born out of the Indian experience and has deep organic roots. These are good signs for social work education in India because in many ways such efforts can also be read as attempts to come out of the shell of western theory and its dominance on social work thinking and practice in our country.

One only hopes that as social work searches for deeper knowledge and deeper truths about the Indian conditions, the social work profession gains strength and confidence to face the Indian reality more truthfully and intervene in ways that include all its peoples, empowers the excluded groups, bring civil culture and civility among the Indian masses and make India a nation in which every single individual takes pride in being its citizens.

A.Ramaiah
TISS, Mumbai

Preface

As an educator in social work, one is exposed not only to field realities and interventions but to very engaging and committed young minds. Minds that are grounded in visions of realizing an egalitarian society, on upholding and practicing democracy, on seeking and defending justice, on informed citizenship and evolved civility, and minds that seek to transform self and society through education and knowledge. Over the years, this opportunity to engage with peoples was not restricted only to students. I have also met peoples with deep insights about reality and genuine commitment to social transformation from across the length and breadth of South Asia.

Also being a faculty in one of the earliest social work institutes in the country, I have also had the opportunity to be part of a massive restructuring process of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) and its social work curriculum. In 2005 it re-imagined its academic and administrative structure and made fundamental changes to its social work programmes in line with its vision and mission.

Initially I taught in the Masters of Arts in Social Welfare Administration. Later in 2007, post restructuring of the TISS, I was part of a group that offered a Concentration on Dalits and Tribes: Social Justice, Equity and Governance. Then in 2012 when another minor restructuring of the social work programmes took place, I was one of the members who formulated a new field of practice - the Masters of Arts in Social Work with Dalit and Tribal

Studies and Action and have been teaching in this programme since.

Over the years, some of the research scholars, friends and students have been requesting me to put my social work lectures and colloquium presentations in the form of a book so that they could better comprehend the theoretical issues that I often lecture about, not the active and combative ones but the more reflective and meditative lectures. I had earlier made one such attempt around a course I teach in Tribal Studies, bringing out an edited book on the subject. The experience of bringing out a text from one's own lectures delivered in a single course was indeed a satisfying exercise. Since I had somewhat succeeded in such a project, I thought I should invest effort to do the same with some of my social work lectures.

One of my students kind of kick-started the process in 2019, when after a lecture on perspectives in Dalit and Tribal Social Work, she sought some readings about an argument I had made, post a very conceptually challenging class. I could not provide the student any immediate original reading material on the same. Finding myself in an awkward position I thought I should attempt to bring together some of my lecture notes into one readable text. It is this reason alone that made me toil a bit to bring out this book. A minor caution though, since most of the texts in this book are notes of lectures, that require more verbal articulation than textual engagement, the ideas are thus sketchy. Nonetheless I have attempted to textualise the basic ideas and lay the framework in ways that make some

theoretical sense. Needless to say that it finally depends on the reader to interpret, make meaning and attempt new ways of seeing the text.

It is important to state here that at a personal level I closely identify with the Navayana School in Indian social work who source their epistemological basis and philosophical ideas from Dr.B.R.Ambedkar. Most of my own theoretical reflections stem from this methodological premise. It is thus important for the reader to realize that this text is written from such a point-of-view. My writings are not written to influence and coerce but to problematise, to unpack, to produce the new and to unravel the possible paths in *anicca*. The word *anicca* is a pali word that denotes a reality that is 'rapidly rising and passing away'. It has a little deeper meaning than the word 'change' and even the word 'evolution'. It signifies movement and transformation embedded in a process of a probabilistic rising and passing away; nothing is fixed and nothing is permanent.

I hope my research scholars, friends and students will benefit from the insights that I have shared in this book. They are reflections that began sometime around 2003 and have further evolved over time into something new. That is why in some places I have used the term *navayana* to denote the newness of the ideas and process.

I thank my students, past and present who have enriched me with their questions and their relentless thirst for emancipatory knowledge. I have had to work and think extra hard to live up to their expectations. I also thank my colleagues in the Center for Social Justice and Governance

who have created a vibrant academic space and turned the teaching/learning process into a knowledge project. I thank the Tribal Intellectual Collective India for allowing me to republish the reworked chapter 3, 4 and 8 in this book. I also thank colleagues from the University of Gavle, Sweden and Tampere, Finland, University of Melbourne, York Canada, Royal University of Bhutan and the National Institute of Social Development Sri Lanka for rich discussions on social work curriculum.

I am tremendously grateful to Anjali, my colleague in the School of Social Work with whom I have debated endlessly over the years on social work curriculum, philosophy and pedagogy. I also thank the vibrant *Navayana* community whose interest in the knowledge enterprise has truly deepened and widened my scope of thinking and equanimous reflection on complex subject domains across the philosophical spectrum.

Last but not the least I thank my two great teachers - Siddhatto Gotamo and Babasaheb Dr.B.R.Ambedkar, two beings committed to truth seeking, pioneers of adult philosophy and compassionate leaders of change and transformation in India. Both saw the pursuit of knowledge as a living project and showed us the path towards 'freedom of mind'. It is from these two humane enlightened teachers that I have taken the word *'Navayana'*, and it is from their knowledge that this book sources its axiological premise, intellectual taste, conceptual elegance and theoretical insights.

bodhi s.r

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Chapter I

Introduction

Cultivation of mind should be the ultimate aim of human existence: Babasaheb Dr.B.R Ambedkar

Broadly, the political position of most social workers in India is generally pro-poor, at times socially distorted and psychologically destabilized by an individual's religious affiliation, caste loyalties and region based linguistic affinity. But overall, most social workers view Indian society from class lens, and it is the category 'poor' that informs their perspective and practice. Their approaches to practice are grounded on the idea of 'developing the poor' and most interventions are framed on 'the upliftment' and 'in partnership with' the 'poor' classes. There are, however, a few social workers whose view of Indian society is grounded fundamentally around 'caste' rather than 'class', and their perspectives and intervention are directed at the structure of caste and against coercive caste relations.

At the personal level I have been definitively impacted by these very conflictual perspectives about the nature of Indian social realities and have changed my perspective multiple times with wider field exposure and direct field engagements. In the light of these often earth-shaking social exposures and concomitant insidious personal psychosocial transformations, I will attempt to capture in this book the changing processes of my perspectives around a single subject-Social Work Curriculum and Pedagogy, contemplated over a period of time.

I have written some of these analytical reflections in the form of field and lecture notes. A few of these notes have been written as early as 2007, making the propositions and content somewhat out dated and a little incongruous. That is to admit that while it would have been judicious from my end to update them and make it more relevant to my students and the social work community that I often engage more intensely with, I have left the main body of text as it is. I have however made minor alterations to these notes to make the text more coherent, readable, contextual and empirically grounded. I have often used these notes in lectures that I deliver to my students and have also presented them to colleagues in colloquiums. Over the years I have also enriched them further based on students' questions and more expansive field experiences.

At the core of most of my writings is a conscious theoretical attempt to view social work content from an alternative perspective, sometimes 'from below', at times 'from within', in other context from 'alternative centers' and also from a 'beyond the binary' points-of-view. These perspectives have a name. It is called the Dalit and Tribal Social Work (DTSW) perspective. All the chapters in this book, except for chapter six (which is my reflection around the year 2019), are fundamentally grounded on these points-of-view.

Social Work Education in India: Its Evolution and Underlying Historical Context

Before unraveling the evolution of social work in India it is important to note that in the year 1936 three schools of

social work were set up in three unique cities. These are the Sir Dorabji Tata Graduate School of Social Work Bombay (now Mumbai), the Sao Paulo School of Social Service and the Institute for Social Work for Girls in Cairo. Whether the setting-up of these institutes on the same year was a mere historical accident or a strategic response to national and global crisis depends on how one conceives social work.

Nonetheless the development of Social Work Education and its curriculum in India can roughly be identified around some key historical phases that began before 1936. While it is non-judicious to fix history rigidly, I will attempt to capture these phases loosely around eight somewhat distinct but key evolutionary time spans. I will look at the debates surrounding the period and also the curriculum offered by various schools during specific phases.

Phase One: Social Work Education - Ideas and Attempts before 1935

Before 1935, from a professional social work discipline point-of-view, there wasn't any framework of real theoretico-historical significance. There were activities of the elites that were fundamentally charitable and some even had a nuanced political vision embedded in charity such as those of the Servant of India Society initiated in 1905. In the late 19 and early 20 century, the practice of what could be loosely called social work was mostly remedial, reformist[1] and ameliorative. The activities taken up were

[1] The contributions at reforms of Hindu society such as those attempted by Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Sasipada

relief for the poor, institutions for widows and orphans, care of the disabled, establishment of charitable dispensaries and the setting of hospitals. Most of these efforts however were contextual depending on activities and interest from one province to another. During this period we also observed a concern for the protection of children as reflected in the Madras Children Act 1920, the Bengal Children Act 1922 and the Bombay Children Act 1924.

As against this backdrop, there were also historical actions and initiatives that can be denoted as fundamental and transformative. Most of these emanated from the 'depressed classes' themselves which included the contributions of Jotiba Phule on education, Shahu Maharaj on political representation and Babasaheb Dr.B.R.Ambedkar on total emancipation. Each organized the 'depressed classes' towards education, livelihoods, development, change and progress. A significant strategy observed during this time were the attempts at altering the consciousness of oppressed peoples while at the same time negotiating spaces with the powers that be through direct field interventions, mass mobilization and the print media.

Bannerji, Mahadev Govind Ranade and Pandita Ramabai, Natarajan was notable. For the Muslim society the efforts of Syed Ahmed Khan was noteworthy. There were also mass reformist movements such as the Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj, the Ramakrishna Mission, the Indian National Social Conference, Women's Indian Association and many others.

Phase Two: The Formulation Period from 1935-1946

Significant during this phase is the setting up of the Sir Dorabji Tata Graduate School of Social Work. There was also fervor to identify areas of interventions especially in Bombay Province. In the year 1936-1937 there was a series of lectures organized on the theme 'Some Social Service of the Government of Bombay'. In these lectures 10 topics were identified. They were Public health programmes, Medical department, work of the labour office, factory law and administration, work-men's compensation, work of labour officer, industrial housing in Bombay city, village improvement in Nasik District, the work of cooperative societies and the Bombay Children Act.

In 1938, a Volume was issued by H. M. Stationery Office, entitled Social Service in India. Its chapter included, Agriculture; Medicine and Public Health; Education; Industrial Labour; Co-operation; and Local Government; Voluntary Effort and Social Welfare. However this period did fall within a period that began in 1920 and lasted till 1947 where the non-cooperation movements were very widespread and active. With a total lack of funds for social service, many social programmes did not proceed beyond a point.[2]

[2] Many of these events were captured by Wadia, A.R (1961) in her book 'History and Philosophy of Social Work.'

Phase Three: The Role Identification Period from 1947-1960

There were many journals that sprang up during this period. The International Social Work (ISW) was started by the International Conference of Social Work and the International Association of Schools of Social Work in 1958, with a base in India. The Social Work Forum (SWF) was started by the Indian Association of Trained Social Workers in 1963. The Lucknow University Journal of Social Work (LUJSW) was started by the Department of Social Work of Lucknow University in 1962. Other publication in social work got a further boost through these journals as well as through publication of books on various aspects of social work profession, authored by educators such as Frances Maria Yasas, D.P. Chaudhary, M.S.Gore and K.K.Jacob. The key event in this period concerns the appointment of the first UGC review committee on Social work education.

Phase Four: The Reflection Period from 1960-1980

The TISS had just celebrated its silver jubilee in 1961. Significant events during this period were the setting up of the two UGC Review committees on social work education. The first was set up in 1960 and the second in 1975. The first committee submitted its report in 1965 and the second in 1980. An important event in social work history that took place in 1964 was when Professional Social Workers and Gandhian Constructive Workers collectively formed a study-group. Three individual - Jayaprakash Narayan (Director, Gandhian Institute of

Studies, Varanasi) Dr. M.S. Gore (Tata Institute of Social Sciences) and Sugata Dasgupta (National Institute of Community Development) initiated this process. Their vision was to create intersections, both in theory and practices, between the two groups and formulate a 'culture-bound theory and philosophy of social work and to disseminate the information.'[3] Proceedings of this study group was published by the Gandhian Institute of Studies, Varanasi in the form of a book titled, "Towards a philosophy of Social Work" in 1967 edited by Dasgupta. This text is rich in content and perspective and did provide an insight into the theoretical processes during the said period.

The Planning Commission also published the first edition of the Encyclopedia of Social Work in India in 1968, with 12 articles on different aspects of social work profession. A significant event took place in the form of G.R. Banarjee's felicitation on her retirement from TISS in 1972 where her papers on social work were compiled in a book form and was later published in 1975 titled 'Field Work Supervision' by the Indian Journal of Social Work (IJSW).

Phase Five: The 'Search for Meaning' Period from 1980-1990

This period was significant in many ways. For one, the report of the second review committee was out and many schools of social work were readapting their curriculum and incorporating new courses like social action and social

[3] Special Issues on Gandhian Contribution to Social Work Profession, Maharashtra Journal of Social Work.

problems in India. Supposedly there were attempts to engage with structure much more than at any point in time in the history of professional social work. While some social work institutes had moved towards a generic social work programme, there were string arguments made to continue the specialization framework in the TISS in 1982. In the domain of the production of social work literature, one could argue that it was this phase that saw the most creative writings in terms of arguments and even research and development. Further the second edition of the Encyclopedia of Social Work in India was published by the Ministry of Welfare in 1987 with 10 articles on the social work profession. R.K. Nayak and H.Y. Siddiqui edited a book on Social Work and Social Development in 1989, mostly based on papers presented at a seminar on social work education in Bhubaneswar.

The UGC also published a Report on the Curriculum Development Centre in Social Work Education in 1990. During this period, we also witnessed the crystallization of people's disenchantment with the development paradigm and its claims to usher a just social order. Saldanha[4] captured these processes in his article 'Towards a Conceptualization of Social Action within Social Work: Teaching Social Action as a Dialogue between Theoretical Perspectives and Between Theory and Practice'.

[4] Saldanha, D (2008). 'Towards a Conceptualization of Social Action Within Social Work: Teaching Social Action as a Dialogue Between Theoretical Perspectives and Between Theory and Practice' in the Indian Journal of Social Work Vol. 69(2), pp. 111-137. There are some very interesting insights in this article. I shall touch on them in the next chapter.

Phase Six: The Contemplative Period from 1991-2004

This was the period that saw the rise of the NGOs and the slow withdrawal of the state from welfare responsibilities. While there were some very innovative attempts by social work educators to enrich social work with newer perspectives and fields of practice, there was not much in terms of impact, both theory and practice made on the lives of the most oppressed and marginalized population in the country. This prompted A.Ramaiah to confront social work education in his famous article 'The Plight of Dalits: A Challenge to Social Work Profession' published by the Tata Institute of Social Sciences special issue brought out in its 60th year celebration on the theme 'Towards a Peoples Centered Development' in 1998. At this point, social work education seems to be engaging with many new domains and even incorporating new teaching content, except for the issues that really matters, in which mass oppression, atrocity and marginalization was all taking place rampantly. I shall engage with his ideas in greater details in the following chapter.

However, it is important to point out that on the issue of women's development, many social work institutes did engage with it in all seriousness. The Directory of Social Work Education Facilities in India, published by the Ministry of Welfare in 1995 which listed a total of 53 schools, mentioned seven institutes where courses on women's issues was part of the curriculum. The course was either titled "women welfare" or "women and child welfare". While the questions of caste was somewhat negated, many social work practitioners and educators have

actively through the years contributed to women's studies, women's movement and reforms in government policies and laws related to women. However, women's/gender issues are still part of a person-centered interest in social work. The issues of teaching courses on women and the effort to integrate gender sensitivity into the curriculum is a political process, as it is considered "subjective" by the traditionalists who believe that education should be 'neutral'[5].

In 1998 the Indian Journal of Social Work published a special issue on 'Gender Aware Social Work'. Several social work educators and practitioners have written on a wide range of concerns of social work, including the imperative need for integration of gender analysis in social work curriculum, like Social Development and Social Policy, recognition of the bias in laws for women, and field instruction. Field practice included gender analysis of specific problems of women like wives of alcoholics, integrated rural development programme for girl children, etc. Further a critique of social work practice and development of theory of practice is essential for social work to effectively stand as a helping profession of the issue of violence against women.

5 Dave and Desai, (1998) quoted in Anjali Dave's 'Feminist Social Work Intervention: Special Cells for women and children' from the Book, "The violence of normal times" edited by Kalpana Kannabiran (2005)

Phase Seven: The Deconstruction Period from 2005-2012

The TISS went through a major restructuring of its social programmes in 2005. As part of this process, a conceptualization that tried to capture the Indian reality was formulated in order to provide a conceptual frame for the formulation of new masters' programme. This was discussed in general body meeting of social work educators in August 2005, in which I was an active participant. The debates and discussions were meant to arrive at an external and internal environment match, leading to the creation of new 'work teams' around Centers[6] that would provide direction for formulation of a new syllabus for the Social Work programme of TISS. The meeting was supposed to facilitate a movement from specializations to super specializations, conceived as 'concentrations'. The earlier five specializations[7] had twelve courses each and in addition there were also basic courses, methods courses and optional courses taught over two years (four semesters). The programme at this point as it appeared after the external-internal environment match emanating from

6 The shift from five departments of social work to six centers includes, (i) Center for Health & Mental Health (ii) Center for Community Organization & Development Practice (iii) Center for Criminology & Criminal Justice (iv) Center for Social Justice & Governance (v) Center for Disability Studies & Action (vi) Center for Equity for Women, Children & Families

7 Family & Child Welfare, Medical & Psychiatric Social work, Urban & Rural Community Development, Criminology & Correctional Administration and Social Welfare Administration

conceptualization of external reality that was presented to the faculty[8] is shown in Diagram 1:

Diagram 1 : Deconstructing the TISS Programme[9]

Focus	Thrust	Field of Practice Concentrations	Knowledge Based / Practice Concentrations
Structural Changing Social, Political, Economic, Cultural & Technological Context	-Political Economy of Development, Poverty & Environmental Justice - Social Structure Resistance & Change - Globalization, Technology Culture & Identity - Democracy, State, Civil Society & Human Rights		(1)Conflicts, Peace & Human Security
Sectoral Capabilities, Mechanisms, Systems	-Development & Governance, -Law & Social Policy, -Health & Education, -Human & Natural Disasters	(1)Health & Development	(2)Rural Devp, Environment & Sustainable Livelihoods (3)Urban Devp: Unorganized Sectors & Livelihoods (4)Social Work in the Field of Mental Health (5)Social Policy & Planning (6)Community Health (7)Disasters, Impoverishment & Social Vulnerability
Realities Group & Identities	-Women, Dalits, Adivasis (Tribals), Minorities, Children, Youth, Aged, Disabled, Delinquent	(2)Women Centered Social Work (3)Dalit & Tribe Centered Social Work (4)Persons with Disability & Equalization of Opportunity (5)Criminology & Justice	(8)Juvenile Justice & Youth in Conflict (9)Developmental/Therapeutic Counseling (10)Socio-Legal Rehabilitation Practice (11)Advanced Practice with Children & Families (12)Youth & Change
Organization Units of Social Organization	-Family & Community	(6)Social Work with Children & Families (7)Community Organization & Development Practice	(13) Family Social Work

The debates concerning the TISS restructuring centered to a great extent on the deconstruction of the earlier specializations. At times it was pitched as a challenge to the

8 Since I was an active participant in this restructuring process, I kept a copy of this initial diagram when it was distributed and discussed among faculty colleagues.

9 TISS Restructuring documents available with the author

earlier specialization framework and in other occasions as an improvement on the same. Fundamental in this process however was the emergence of new areas that were called 'Fields of Practice'.

Around the years 2006 to 2010 there was numerous attempts across the country to indigenize social work curriculum and a number of proposals, innovations and frameworks were institutionalised. A cross sectional overview of social work programmes of different institutes in the country around the years 2009-2010 shows the spread of the social work curriculum between schools of social work. I will take the case of the Department of Social Work Mizoram University, the Loyola College Chennai, Bharati Vidyapeeth University Pune, Lucknow University and Tata Institute of Social Sciences Mumbai. I have handpicked universities from north, south, west and east India and restricted my analysis to them. I will present below a brief overview of their course curriculum across four semesters.

Diagram 2 : Mizoram University (2009)[10]

First Semester	-Foundations of Social Work Practice -Social , Economic and Political Environment -Human Growth and Development -Working with Individuals -Working with Groups
Second Semester	-Working with Communities -Social Work Research -Social Work in Health and Mental Health -Social Work with Families -Social Work with Children
Third Semester	-Social Welfare Management -Social Policy and Planning -Social Legislation -Rural and Urban Development -Youth Work
Fourth Semester	-Integrated Social Work Practice -Social Development -Women and Development -Tribal Development -Counseling: Theory and Practice

Mizoram University as one can observe from the curriculum framework was generic in approach and thrust. This was prevalent across many social work colleges in the North East of India where the generic thrust is perceived as more feasible and even efficacious.

10 Mizoram University, Department of Social Work. http://www.mzu.edu.in/schools/social%20work.html (dated 10th December, 2009)

Diagram 3 : Loyola College Chennai (2009)[11]

First Semester	-Social Work Profession: History, Philosophy & Methods. -Sociology and Indian Society -Human Growth and Development -Introduction to Social Case Work & Social Group Work
Second Semester	-Community Organization & Social Action -Social Work Research & Social Statistics -Social Work Administration & Social Legislation -Advanced Social Case Work & Social Group Work
Third Semester	-Counselling Specialization: **Spl: Community Development** (1)Rural Economy & Cooperation (2) Rural Community Development (3) Welfare of Weaker Section **Spl: Human Resource Management** (1) Industrial Relations & Trade Union (2) Labour Legislation& Case Laws (3)Human Resource Management **Spl: Medical and Psychiatric SWk** (1)Medical Social Work in India (2) Psychiatric Disorders (3) Health Situation in India **Spl: Welfare of the Disadvantaged Section** (1)Children in India (2) Welfare of Weaker Sections (3) Women & Devp **Spl: Human Rights** (1)Human Rights : International Perspective (2) Human Rights in India: The Constitution & Legal Framework (3) Contemporary Issues in Human Rights
Fourth Semester	-Computer Application for Social Work Research Project **Specialization:** **Spl: Community Development** (4)Urban Community Development (5)Management of N.G.O **Spl: Human Resource Management** (4)Labour Welfare (5) Organizational Behaviour **Spl: Medical and Psychiatric SWk** (4)Management of N.G.O (5)Psychiatric Social Work **Spl: Welfare of the Disadvantaged Section** (4)Displacement & Rehabilitation (5)Management of N.G.O **Spl: Human Rights** (4)Human Rights and Social Work Practice (5)Management of N.G.O

Loyola College as shown above offers five interesting specializations with a wide spread generic thrust across the four semesters.

11 Loyola College, Department of Social Work, Chennai www.loyolacollege.edu/socialwork.html (dated 10th December, 2009)

Diagram 4 : Bharati Vidyapeeth University (2009)[12]

First Semester	-Indian Society & Social Problems -Social Work History & Ideologies -Methods of SWP - Work with Individuals -Methods of SWP - Work with Groups -Methods of SWP - Work with Community and Social Action **Specialization:** FCW – (1)Family Sociology (2)Child Devp & Socialization URCD – (1)Rural and Urban Sociology (2)Tribal Devp PMIR – (1) Industrial Sociology(2) Unorganized Labour MPSW – (1) Medical & Psychiatric Social Work (2) Introduction to Physiology & Anatomy
Second Semester	-Community Health and Health Care System -Human Growth & Behaviour -NGOs & Programme Management -Methods of Social Work Practice – -Models & Strategies of Community Organization -Social Work Research – I **Specialization:** FCW- (3)Child in India – Situational Analysis (4)Women's Status, Issues & Empowerment URCD- (3)Rural Economy (4)Co-operative Practices in Rural Devp PMIR- (3)Trade Unions in India (4)Labour Economics MPSW- (3)Psychiatry – Child & Adult (4) Counseling in Health Care
Third Semester	-Social Work Research - II -Social Welfare Policy, Planning & Practices -Social Laws and Procedures **Specialization:** **Spl:Family & Child Welfare** (5) Child Welfare Policies and Prog (6) Family Life & Population Education (7)Youth Development (8) Social Work Intervention with Disabled **Spl:Urban & Rural Community Development** (5)Urban Community Devp (6)-Rural Community Devp (7)Policies and Prog of Community Devp (8) Management of Community Devp Prog **Spl:Personnel Mgmt & Industrial Relations** (5)Labour Legislation (6)H R M Info System & Practices(7) Industrial Relations & Case Studies (8) Personnel Management **Spl:Medical & Psychiatric Social Work** (5)Psychosocial Aspects of Care & Rehab (6)Health Education & Health Promotion (7)Management of Hospitals & Health Care Institutions (8)Multi Disciplinary Approach to Health Care: Social Work Intervention
Fourth Semester	-Environmental Issues & Disaster Management -Development Communication & Media -Counseling in Social Work – Theory & Practice Specialization: **Spl:Family & Child Welfare** (9)Family Counseling (10) Gender Issues & Justice (11) Social Work in Secondary Set-up (12) Education & Social Work Intervention **Spl:Urban & Rural Community Development** (9)Community Development Movements in India (10) Democratic Decentralization, Panchayat Raj & Municipal Administration (11)Livelihood Skills & Micro Finance(12) Trend in Community Development **Spl:Personnel Mgmt & Industrial Relations** (9)Occupational Health & Safety (10)Human Resources Development (11) Labour Welfare Administration (12) Organizational Behavior **Spl:Medical & Psychiatric Social Work** (9)AIDS – Health Care & Support (10)Legal Aspects of Health(11)Psycho Social Aspects of Psychiatric Patients and Rehab (12)Health Care & Disability

12 See Prospectus of Bharati Vidhyapeth University, Section on Department of Social Work(as on 10th December, 2009)

Bharati Vidyapeeth Pune had four specializations and offers a wide range of social work courses across the four semesters.

Diagram 5 : Lucknow University (2009)[13]

First Semester	-Social work: Concept, Nature & Development -Personality & Dynamics of Human Behaviour -Social Case Work: Theory & Practice -Social Group Work: Theory & Practice -Community Organization: Theory & Practice
Second Semester	-Contemporary Concerns & Structure of Society -Social & Human Development -Population & Environment -Social Work Research -Social Welfare Administration & Social Action
Third Semester	-Social Work: Themes & Perspectives -Social Policy & Social Planning in India -Statistics & Computer Applications **Specialization (Electives) Papers** **Spl: Labour Welfare & Human Resource Management** (1)Trade Unions & Industrial Relations (2) Labour Welfare & Social Security **Spl: Health & Health Care System** (1)Dimensions of Health & Medical Social Work (2)Psychosomatic Factors of Health **Spl: Family Centered Social Work Intervention** (1)Women's Problems & Legislation for Empowerment (2)Youth Welfare & Development **Spl: Rural & Urban Development** (1)Perspectives on Rural Development in India (2)Rural Society & Panchayati Raj Institutions **Spl: Correctional Social Work** (1)Criminology & Penology (2)Correctional Admin
Fourth Semester	**-Counseling & Communication** **-Participatory Approaches to Development & Social Work Practice Skills** **-Political Economy & Development** **Specialization (Electives) Papers** **Spl: Labour Welfare & Human Resource Management** **(3)Human Resource Management (4) Labour Legislation in India** **Spl: Health & Health Care System** **(3)Psychiatric Social Work & Health (4)Mental & Personality Disorders** **Spl: Family Centered Social Work Intervention** **(3)Child Welfare & Development (4)Welfare of the Aged** **Spl: Rural & Urban Development** **(3)Urban Development in India (4)Urban Planning in India** **Spl: Correctional Social Work** **(3)Correction: Theory & Practice (4)Social Work Practice in Corrections**

The Lucknow University also offers five specializations with an even spread of social work basic courses across all the four semesters.

13 See Ordinances & Syllabus, Lucknow University, Faculty of Arts, Department of Social Work, (as on 10th December, 2009)

Diagram 6 : Tata Institute of Social Sciences[14]

First Semester	**Foundation Courses (FC)** FC 1: Understanding Society FC2: Introduction to Economics FC3: Devp Experience, Social Conflict & Change FC4: Polity, Governance & Public Policy **Social Work Practice (SWP)** SWP-Group Work -Participatory Communication -Critical Perspective on Society: Intro to Social Theory -Quantitative Research Methods in SW
Second Semester	FC5: Law & Social Work SWP-Case Work SWP-Community Org SWP-Social Work Admin SWP-Social Work Perspectives: -History & Ideology of Social Work -Qualitative Research Methods in Social Work
Third Semester	SWP-Social Action, Networking & Advocacy **FIELD of PRACTICE CONENTRATION:** **(i)Community Organization & Development Practice** (1)Theoretical Perspective on Community (2) Advanced Community Organization (3) Seminar on Community Organization (4) Global Economy & Polity (5) Development Practice (6) Participatory Planning & Assessment (7) Rural Reality & Development Practice **(ii)Person with Disability & Equalization of Opportunity** (1)Rehab Contexts for Persons with Disability (2) Human Rights, Social Policy & Law (3) Rehab & Counseling Intervention (4) Family Centered Intervention with Families of Children & Adults with Disabilities (5) Rural Practicum-Common Inputs **(iii)Health & Development** (1)Social Sciences & Health (2) Health & Devp I and II (3) Health Research(4)Intro to Mental Health(5)Community Mental Health (6) Concepts , Policies & Prog of Community Health (7) Community Health: Processes & Practice (8) Rural Realities, Health & Mental Health **(iv)Dalits & Tribes: Social Justice, Equity & Governance** (1)Dalit & Tribal Social Work (2) Political Economy of Dalit Devp (3) Political Economy of Tribal development (4) Seminar on Dalit & Tribal Issues (5) Advance Dalit & Tribal Social Work Practice Skills (6) Innovative Intervention in Dalit & Tribal Empowerment (7) Rurality, Rural, Caste & Tribe **(v)Criminology & Justice** (1) Criminology: Trends & Perspectives (2) Criminal Justice: Law & Policy(3)Seminar on Crime Prevention & Strategies (4) Social Work Methods in Criminal Justice (5) Communication in Criminal Justice (6) Technology & Crime-Forensic Sciences (7) Crime & Justice in Rural India **(vi)Social Work with Children & Families** (1)Situational Analysis of Children In India (2)Policies & Prog for Children (3) Vulnerable Children (4) Skills of Working with Children in Vulnerable Situations (5) Family in India(6)Development Interventions across the Family Life Cycle (7) Issues & Concerns of Children & Families in Rural India **(vii)Women Centered Social Work** (1)Women History & Society (2) Seminar on the Gendered Body: Sexuality & Violence (3) Working with Women Part A:Women Devp Practice & Politics , Part B: Feminist Social Work Practice (4) Engendering Law & Justice in India (5) Engendering Rural Realities

14 See Prospectus 2009-2011, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Master's Degree Programmes, TISS (2009)

Fourth Semester	**Knowledge Based Intervention / Skills** Concentration: **(i)Rural Development, Environment & Sustainable Livelihoods** (1)Rural Society & State (2) Governance (3)Environment & Livelihoods (4) Law Policy & Institutions (5) Rural Devp: Challenges & Practice **(ii)Urban Developpment: Unorganized Sectors & Livelihoods** (1)Political Economy of Urbanization in the South (2) Planning & Governance of Cities (3) Poverty, Livelihood & Informal Sector (4) Seminar on Urban Devp, Livelihood, Informal Sector (5) Urban Devp Practicum **(iii)Social Work in the Field of Mental Health** (1)Legislations, Prog, Policies in Mental Health (2)Gender & Mental Health(3) Child & Adolescent Mental Health (4) Seminar on Emerging Mental Health Issues (5) Perspective on Mental Health, Poverty & Marginalization **(iv)Social Policy & Planning** (1)Theoretical Perspective on Social Policy (2) Policy, Government & Governance(3) Social Planning & Policy research (4) Seminar on Social Policy & Advocacy (5) Field Study Engagement **(v)Community Health** (1)Community Health Planning & Mgmt (2) Health Communication & Training (3) Gender, Health & Rights (4) Seminar in Community Health (5) Environmental Health **(vi)Disasters, Impoverishment & Social Vulnerability** (1) Introduction to Disasters (2) Disaster Response & Mitigation(3) Health Intervention in Disaster Situations (4) Seminar on Disaster Mgmt (5) Engaging with Social Realities in Disaster Situations **(vii)Juvenile Justice & Youth in Conflict** (1) Perspective & Legislation Related to Children & Youth (2) Juvenile Justice System (3) Youth Deviance: Etiology & Emerging Trends (4) Intervention Strategies & Skills (5) Perspective & Legislation Related to Children & Youth Contextualizing Children in the globalised World **(viii)Developmental/Therapeutic Counseling** (1) Personal & Professional Issues in Therapeutic/ Developmental Practice (2) Effective Methodologies of Working with Children & Adolescent (3) Therapeutic Counseling Interventions (4) Issues of working with Special Populations (5) Skills for working with Child Victims of Sexual Abuse & Exploitation **(ix)Socio-Legal Rehabilitation Practice** (1)Correctional Policies, Legislations & Institutions (2) Emerging Trends in Aftercare & Rehab (3) Seminar on Human Rights & Access to Justice-I (4) Seminar on Human Rights & Access to Justice-II (5) Counseling & Advocacy Skills (6) Field Engagement **(x)Advanced Practice with Children & Families** (1)Approaches & Models of Counseling with Children (2) Skills for working with Child Victims of Sexual Abuse & Exploitation (3)Family Centered Social Work Practice (4) Interventions with Couples in Relationship Conflict (5) Contemporary Practices in the Field of Children & Family **(xi)Youth & Change** (1)Youth & Development (2) Skills of Working with Youth-I (3)Skills of Working with Youth-II (4) Practice-based Project & Seminar on Youth **-Theme Based Concentration** **(xii) Conflicts, Peace & Human Security** (1) State, Democracy & Conflicts in India (2)Nation State & Politics of Identity (3)Conflicts, Violence & Collective Violence (4)Human Security: Concepts, debates & Trends (5)Conflict Transformation & Peace Building **OPTIONAL COURSES:** (1)Governance of NPO (2)Organizational Behavior in NPO (3)Strategic Mgmt for NPO (4)Financial Mgmt for NPO (5)Project Mgmt (6)Training for Social Work Personnel(7)Non-Formal Education (8)International Social Work (9)Spiritual Social Work

In the TISS, Mumbai however, a new concept called 'concentrations' replaced the earlier 'specializations' in

social work. They were formulated around major and minor concentrations. The major concentrations were conceived around 'Fields of Practice' (FOP) and the minor concentrations were conceived around 'knowledge based', 'skill areas' and 'thematic based'. While the first year was generic in approach and thrust, beginning third semester students were to choose their field of practice concentrations. There were a total of seven Fields of Practice concentrations of 12 credits each with a rural practicum attached to the concentrations. These concentrations were offered to the students of which they can choose one. In the fourth semester students had to opt for one out of twelve thematic, knowledge based or skill based concentrations of total 8 credits each. First year field work placements was generic while the third and fourth semester fieldwork was attached to the third semester concentration.

Interestingly around the years 2011 to 2012 there was another critical re-assembling of social work curriculum that kick-started in the TISS. The reasons for the same are plenty but it suffices to state that somewhere the immediate curriculum was not sitting well within the school context when other factors like student's choices, faculty expertise, field requirements and institutional capacities were considered. The realization that came about was that there was a need for rationalization of the curriculum keeping in mind faculty workload, student's needs and possibility of offering all social work programmes. Based on the system of giving students a free choice to opt for their areas of interest, a hierarchy of sorts was setting in among the FOPs

which was felt important to dilute. A number of committees were set up to relook and streamline the curriculum in which colleagues from other social work departments of different universities also participated actively.

During this period I had personally travelled to many social work colleges[15] and had detailed discussions with social work colleagues on curriculum. Most were very keen to hear about the new TISS curriculum. While some were appreciative of the innovations taking place, others were not so enthused by such wide spread conceptualization of social work. I did feel a tension around curriculum among colleagues from colleges who were strict adherents of the generic programmes and the specializations. The TISS however went ahead with its second round of restructuring of their programmes in 2011 and by 2012 its Academic Council passed the new social work curriculum that was offered for the upcoming batches. I have provided a detailed account of the same in the third chapter of the book while conceptualizing the 'field'.

Phase Eight: The Navayana Period beginning 2012

During this phase we observed the rise and consolidation of more organic social work curriculum that spoke directly on domains that emanated from marginalized and excluded groups. Significant among them are Dalit and Tribal Studies and Action which constitutes Dalit Social Work and Tribal

15 I visited the social work department Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi University, Lucknow University, Nirmala Niketan, Rajagiri College of Social Work, Karve Institute of Social Service and discussed their curriculum with them and also shared the new curriculum in TISS.

Social Work, Women Centered Practice and Disability Studies and Action.

Many other schools of social work were also reviewing their curriculum at this point and inserting components that directly engage with structure, structural issues and social development. However while new courses were added to existing curriculum, there was nothing significant in terms of new domains of social work practice. Some still sought a generalist practice while some still follow the specialization model. The TISS in 2012 offered three new Masters of Arts in Social Work with nine social work programmes. I will touch upon only the three new programmes as I have noted above.

The Masters in 'Dalit and Tribal Studies and Action' (DTSA) offered 78 credits. There were 26 credits of thematic courses, 12 credits of fieldwork and 6 credits for research. The other remaining credits had a generic thrust. The DTSA programme was unique and the only one of its kind in the country. It has a very philosophical but contextual thrust and is wide in scope and theoretical depth. It engages with global realities from a Dalit and Tribal perspective. These are conceptually rich perspectives that provide students with an extensive understanding of social realities.

Diagram 7 : The M.A. Social Work in Dalit and Tribal Studies and Action[16]

First Semester	FC 1 Understanding Society FC 2 Introduction to Economics FC 3 Development Experience, State, Social Conflict and Change SW1.2 Social Case Work SW1.1 Social Group Work SW2 History and Perspectives of Social Work SW4 Research Methods I **DTSA 1 Rural, Rurality, Caste and Tribes** FW1.1 Field Work
Second Semester	SW1.3 Community Organization SW3 Critical Perspectives on Social Work: Introduction to Social Theories SW1.4 Social Welfare Administration SW5 Research Methods II **DTSA 2 Political Theory for Critical Social Work** **DTSA 3 Term Paper on Dalit and Tribal Studies** FW1.2 Field Work
Third Semester	**DTSA 4 Dalit and Tribal Social Work: Perspectives & Concepts** **DTSA 5 Political Economy, Development and Dalits** **DTSA 6 Caste, State & Politics in South Asia** **DTSA 7 Tribes, State and Governance** **DTSA 8 International Social Work and Indigenous Peoples** **DTSA 9 Advanced Dalit and Tribal Social Work Practice Skills** **DTSA 10 Law, Justice and Democratic Rights** **FW2.1 Field Work**
Fourth Semester	**DTSA 11 Tribal and Dalit Movements: Theory & Practice** **DTSA 12 Project Planning and Management** **DTSA 13 OPTIONALS (Students can opt any one of the course given below 13.1 or 13.2 or other courses offered by MA programmes within TISS)** **13.1 Social Policy, Government and Governance OR** **13.2 Social Entrepreneurship among Dalits and Tribes** **Research** **FW2.2 Field Work**

The M.A. Social Work in Women Centered Practice (WCP) had similar credit structure like DTSA. It is also one of its kinds in the country and is rich both theoretically and practice. The curriculum is as presented below:

16 M.A. Social Work Curriculum [with specific reference to the Nine thematic programmes] 2012-2014, School of Social Work, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai passed by the Academic Council of the TISS in 28th March 2012.

Diagram 8 : The M.A. Social Work in Women Centered Practice[17]

First Semester	FC 1 Understanding Society FC 2 Introduction to Economics FC 3 Development Experience, State, Social Conflict and Change SW1.2 Social Case Work SW1.1 Social Group Work SW2 History and Perspectives of Social Work SW4 Research Methods I **WS1/C1.7.1 Women History & Society; Feminist Theory & Perspectives (4 cr)** FW1.1 Field Work
Second Semester	SW1.3 Community Organization SW3 Critical Perspectives on Social Work: Introduction to Social Theories SW1.4 Social Welfare Administration SW5 Research Methods II **C1.7.5 Engendering Rural Realities – Rural Practicum** FW1.2 Field Work
Third Semester	**C1.7.4 Engendering law & Justice in India -I** **C1.7.6 Women & Work** **C1.7.2 Seminar on Gendered Body Sexuality and Violence** **C1.7.3 Work with Women –(I) WCSW & (II) WDPP** **CODP 6 Social Action, Advocacy and Movements*** **FW2.1 Field Work**
Fourth Semester	**C1.7.4 Engendering Law & Justice in India -II** **C1.7.7 Engendering Non-Formal Education** **C1.7.8 Seminar on WCP** **DTSA11 Tribal and Dalit Movements: Theory and Practice*** **Research** **FW2.2 Field Work**

Finally the Disability Studies and Action (DSA) programme which is an important area that the School of Social Work in the TISS, Mumbai has been trying to augment and strengthen over the years also came up with its own curriculum structure as presented below.

17 Ibid., One important note is that in the WCP programme Students have the choice to opt for any one of the Social Action Courses namely, CODP6: Social Action, Advocacy and Movements or DTSA11: Tribal and Dalit Movements: Theory and Practice.

Diagram 9 : The M.A. Social Work in Disability Studies and Action[18]

First Semester	FC 1 Understanding Society FC 3 Development Experience, State, Social Conflict and Change FC 4 Polity, Governance and Public Policy SW1.2 Social Case Work SW1.1 Social Group Work SW2 History and Perspectives of Social Work SW4 Research Methods I **FC5 Law and Social Work** FW1.1 Field Work
Second Semester	SW1.3 Community Organization SW3 Critical Perspectives on Social Work: Introduction to Social Theories SW1.4 Social Welfare Administration SW5 Research Methods II **FC 6 Human Growth and Behavior** **DSA 1 Theoretical Perspectives and their Application to Disability Rehabilitation Social Work;** **DSA2 Persons with Disability and their Rehabilitation Contexts** FW1.2 Field Work
Third Semester	**DSA 3 Human Rights, Social Policies and Law** **DSA 4 Rehabilitation and Counseling Interventions** **DSA 5 Family-Centered Interventions with Families of Children and Adults with Disabilities** **DSA 6 The Gender Dimensions of Disability in the Indian Context** **FW2.1 Field Work**
Fourth Semester	**DSA 7 Management of Rehabilitation Programmes for the Disabled** **DSA 8 Building Disability Awareness through Action** **DSA 9 Seminar on Community Interventions in the Rural Context Research** **FW2.2 Field Work**

There are other new programmes that emerged during this time but the above three were unique as it was for the first time that social work curriculum began to enter such challenging domains. Since these very unique programmes have been introduced in the TISS, their curriculum (as presented above in the Diagrams 7, 8 and 9) has gone through further alterations. Each of these programmes have now incorporated the new concept mandated and institutionalised by the University Grants Commission around the concept of CBCS or Choice Based Credit

18 Ibid., The DSA programme is also recognized by the Rehabilitation Council of India

System courses. Nevertheless the overall structure of most curriculum remains as structured initially.

It is also important to note here that during this period new social work journals came into the public domain. Significant among them are the Indian Journal of Dalit and Tribal Social Work (IJDTSW) that published its first issue in 2012. Later in 2013 another journal, the Indian Journal of Dalit and Tribal Studies and Action (IJDTSA) was introduced. Both these journals were copyrighted by the Tribal Intellectual Collective India.[19]

In the domain of social work perspectives, a number of ways of seeing began to emerge during this period having implications both on social work education and practice. While I have detailed these perspectives from across regions of the globe in the following chapters, I will try to bring them together in a conceptual frame and present it in Diagram 10 below under the title – Perspectives in Indian Social Work after 2013. However, a note of caution regarding the same; when one brings all social work perspectives together cutting across context in the world, including those emerging from India under a single framework, the conceptions overlaps and becomes more complex. The perspectives from India that I place in the framework were available in the public domain around 2013, some of which have been further refined into various Master's programmes.

19 The Tribal Intellectual Collective India began in 2009 and I have been its National Convener (Academic) since.

Diagram 10 : Perspectives in Indian Social Work after 2013[20]

Focus on Structure	**Radical Social Work** (Raisers of consciousness) {Anti Oppression Perspective }	**Structural Social Work** [Pro Equality] {Pro Change Perspective }	**Women Centered Social Work** {Anti Patriarchy} { Pro Women Perspective}	**Dalit Social Work** {Anti Caste} {Perspective from below}
Focus on Community	**Tribal Social Work** {Diversity - Dialogue} {Perspective from within}		**Gandhian Social Work** {Reform - Reconstruct} {Perspective from above}	
Focus on Individual	**Interactionist Social Work** (Seekers after meaning) {Systems Perspective}		**Traditional Social Work** (Fixers) {Perspective: Status quo}	
Note: Howe's (1987) labels for each grouping are given in parentheses ( ) and Mullaly's (1993) label for Structural Social Work is given in square brackets [ ]. The author's formulations are given in curly brackets { }.				

20 Based on the earlier framework by Howe (1987) which includes Traditional Social Work (fixers), Marxist Social Work (revolutionaries), Radical Social Work (raisers of consciousness) and Interactionist Social Work (seekers after meaning) Sources: Whittington and Holland (1985), D. Howe (1987), I have added Mulally's (1993) conception of structural social work and made my own interpretation of his position. In addition I have also further refined the conception of the ideologies in social work practice in the domain of the theoretical premise from an earlier paper published by adivaani in bodhi s.r(2016) on Tribal Social Work, Dalit Social Work, Gandhian Social Work and made minor additions and changes to Structural Social Work, Radical Social Work and Women Centered Social Work. An important point to note regarding social work perspectives in India is that among the many newer social work ideas that I have placed in Diagram 10, the school of Gandhian social work remains dominant in both teaching and practice. Other perspectives and schools of thought to this day, still occupy miniscule theoretical space in social work education.

As on 2019, there are also newer ideas that have emerged since. One of which I shall engage in greater details in chapter six. However as a consolidated theoretical closure to the above eight phases of the evolution of social work education, I will attempt to provide an overarching framework to read the same around the idea of social work epistemologies.

Some Thoughts on Theoretical Realms in Social Work Practice

Based on my observation and experience in curriculum related matters, I have often been pushed to think more deeply about premises of social work ideas. In my understanding each of the theoretical formulations concerning social work education in India rest on three different but overarching premises. One set of ideas could be grouped under the framework of "normative', the other under the term "discursive" and the last under the term "navayana". While the first two frameworks are not difficult to understand and are spoken of by many social work educators, the navayana perspective is 'new'. The word 'new' is also what 'navayana'[21] signify. At this juncture

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21 In my conception, Navayana springs from a locale beyond a mind centered dualistic conception of text/context. It however encompasses the totality rather than a discriminated reality. Navayana includes the 'binary', the framework of 'beyond the binary' and the realms between the two which I call the 'subtle and sublime binaries'. I attempt to reflect on a non-binary conception of social work from beyond the dualistic premise. In this regard I attempt to answer questions such as, what are the possibilities of writing text that are non dualistic? What does writing from such a space entail? How does one write a text located in such spaces? What kind of social work emerges from such locales?

it suffices to state that the perspective is grounded on a contextualist view of the world and is somewhat resistant to the acceptance of any single 'universal' and the imposition of any universal on realities that is conceived to be fundamentally multiple and diverse.

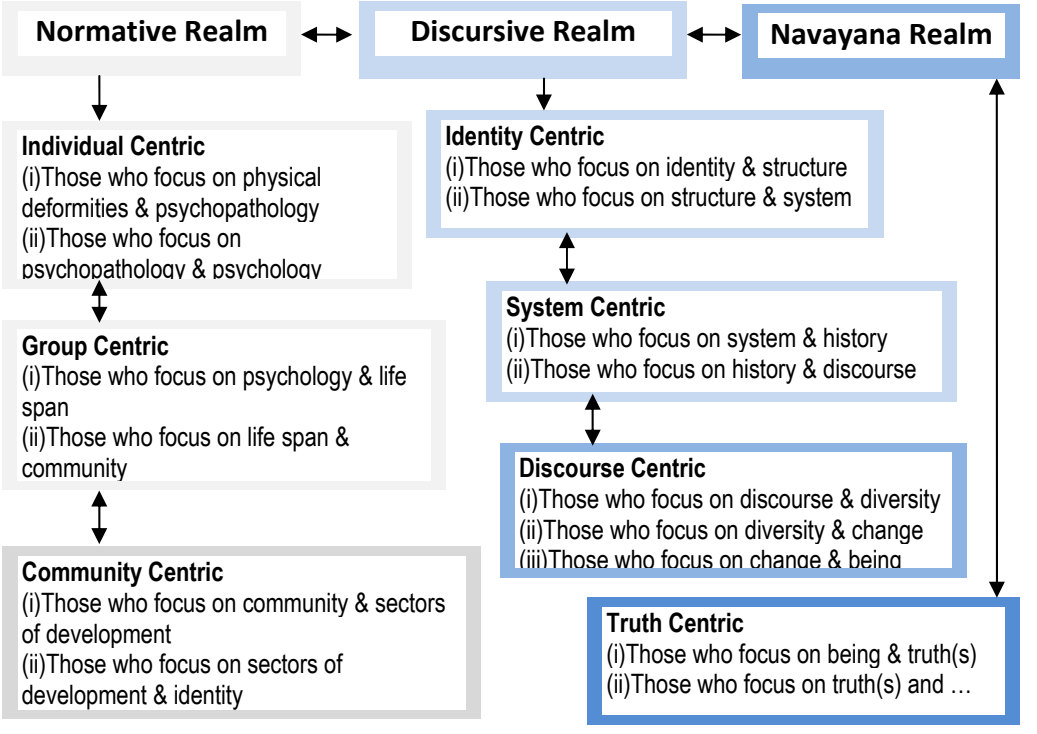
All the three conceptions are ideas that are currently being debated and discussed among progressive social workers in India interested in change, transformation, liberty and empowerment. Each perspective stems from a certain perception/conception of reality with a concomitant identification and thrust on a distinct area of action and intervention. Further, each overarching framework is further differentiated around a basic premise and secondary premise with an emergent focus on identified fields of practice.

While it would have been far more enriching to detail each of the analytical frames, I will restrict myself only to unraveling them at the most basic ontological/epistemological level that opens up to meaning-making and interpretation for the reader. I will attempt to represent these complex ideas in Diagram 11, in a language that is not difficult to understand. I assume most social work educators who have studied its history would be able to immediately identify these theoretical conceptions. However while the propositions asserted in each realm are self explanatory, the conception does require some contemplation to comprehend. A caution however needs to be brought to the awareness of the reader, that for the part on Navayana social work premise, although not

difficult to understand, I shall attempt to engage with the same in greater detail in chapter six.

I have titled Diagram 11 as 'Social Work Epistemology(s)- The Three Theoretical Realms' to encapsulate under a single conceptual framework the intrinsically linked ideas of social work ontology, premise and perspectives.

Diagram 11 : Social Work Epistemology(s) - The Three Theoretical Realms



The Theoretical Thrust of the Text

All the chapters in this book have two key motives. One is more personal, that is to engage more deeply with social work education, to problematise the 'given' and to produce the new. Two is more related to my students, that is to write in ways that clarify perspectives and transmit social work 'skills' and insights through writing to them.

Over the years I have personally used these lecture notes to clarify my own thought process and to deepen my understanding of the said domain, all the while transacting skills to my learning/teaching community whenever I prepare my lectures and deliver them.

Following this introduction, in chapter two I will attempt to historicize social work education from a Dalit and Tribal Social Work (DTSW) perspective. By 'DTSW' perspective I mean a point-of-view fundamentally located in a Dalit and Tribal ways of looking at social work history, processes and change. To give this historicization of social work a greater spread, I posit the same within the larger overarching global debate on social work education. In this engagement, I unravel some of the key ideas in social work education and discuss the rich ideas and frameworks emanating from the same.

In chapter three I engage with a key concept in social work; the 'field'. The concept 'field' is used so often and across such wide domains in social work education that we have lost sight of what it probably refers to. Sometimes taken as given, I felt there was a need to deconstruct such conceptual 'givens', not only to produce new meanings but also to challenge the status quo.

In the fourth chapter I attempt a problematization of social work methods, again from a DTSW points-of-view. The concept of methods in Indian social work education occupies a central position in both teaching and practice. The fact that social work methods are theoretically coherent, have massive amount of literature to back its

teaching, is output oriented and gives social workers a professional tag make the methods fundamental to social work education. However these methods are also a contentious issue and are the source of theoretical conflicts in social work. They are often the key reasons for acrimonious debates among social work educators and practitioners. In this chapter I have tried to provide a different way of looking at them applying them to a 'test of context'.

In chapter five, I touch upon the micro elements of the social work curriculum and attempt to unravel their premises, their objectives, their expected outcomes and how they link to other processes within the curriculum framework. This reflection was important for me for many reasons, but the key reason being the need to re-imagine the social work curriculum.

The sixth chapter constitutes the notes of a lecture I delivered to the Navayana Social Work community in Mumbai on the subject of the 'Navayana learning process'. Under the aegis of the Navayana Sangha, we meet often to discuss and reflect on theoretical issues that concerns the learning and unlearning process of 'Navayana'. In this chapter I engage little more deeply with the constitutive concepts and the Navayana Social Work framework.

The seventh chapter focuses on fieldwork pedagogy, pedagogical practices and pedagogical strategies. Here I attempt to flesh out minute processes involved in fieldwork supervision and the learning/educating process. I had wanted to cover the whole two years programme but the

article became too lengthy and thus restricted myself to only the first year fieldwork. Over the years I have also engaged more deeply with second year fieldwork and have gained many more insights into fieldwork education. I will leave this part out of this book for now.

The final concluding chapter is an interview I had given on the history and evolution of Dalit and Tribal Social Work in India based on my own engagement and experience. Having been one of the persons who took active part in formulating the DTSW curriculum, I shared my insights in the interview about minute theoretical issues and administrative processes that went into the development of the programme. Since 2006 when the programme was launched, till 2019, with many changes taking place in between, the DTSW programme has further deepened both its theory and practice. Students have given a very positive feedback about the course and many who have passed out are spread across India engaging and contributing to the very challenging empowerment process in the country.

Chapter II

Historicizing Social Work Education
An Exercise in Discursive Practice

Freedom of Mind is the Real Freedom: Dr.B.R Ambedkar

This chapter is framed as a critical reflection on the 'historical shift', directed not only at problematizing the discipline of social work but also as a means of identifying the progressive trends emerging in theory and practice within the social work profession. I attempt to identify the global contours of contemporary debates within the profession, critically examine the historical status of social work education in India and conclude by unraveling invisible, yet pulsating indigenous liberatory social work theory that are being articulated from India that resounds with other emancipatory frameworks across the world.

In the year 2016 I brought out an edited book on 'social work in India'. I titled one of the chapters engaging with the history of social work education as 'Professional Social Work Education in India: A Critical View from the Periphery'.[22] Interestingly this article did strike a chord with

[22] The ideational seeds for this article can be found in a 'Field Note' that I published in a social work journal in India in 2011. Later in 2016, I made few changes to the earlier note and included the same in a book I edited on Social Work in India. This was part of the series on Tribal and Adivasi Studies, Perspectives from Within by the Tribal Intellectual Collective India, published by adivaani, Kolkata. Over the years I have delivered many lectures based on this article to my students. Sourced from my own insights and teaching experiences, I have reworked this article, fine tune the language, deepened the

a few social workers in India. I received two requests from social work colleagues to permit me to translate this article into two other Indian languages – Hindi and Kannada. Other than this little excitement that I thought it generated, there was neither talk nor discussions on the said subject. Social Work education in India is very interesting for two very counter intuitive reasons. One, it does not have its own indigenous theory. Most of the teaching content in terms of basic courses is borrowed from western literature, and two, there is no excitement in theory building. I do not remember the last organic emancipatory theoretical piece produced about Indian social work that does not borrow ideas from Western European thought.

Even the debates within social work education in India did seemed more western than Indian. As educators we are far more informed about knowledge produced by western social work educators and workers from Britain, Australia and Canada. This is not to take away from the fact that the social work teaching content in India from the mid forties was greatly influenced by Gandhiji's ideas. Based on my own observation of social work education, (but more as a matter of opinion), most Institutes of social work in India actually teach Gandhian Social Work, but because the idea has become so mainstreamed, it is simply called Social Work. What perplexes me though is why those who adhere to his vision are so fond and dependent on western theoretical formulations, the very ideas he rejected.

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footnotes and brought in new content related to the history of social work education in India.

This is not to say that I myself devalue or disagree with western social work formulation and teaching. They are indeed a genuine attempt by western social workers to confront and resolve the problems of western society. What I disagree however is its imposition or acceptance as a universal framework that applies across time, space and context.

A deeper look into western social work knowledge reveals that such frameworks are nothing more than rules of thinking of a single community (Western European) that positions itself as the only producer and final arbiter of all knowledge that should be considered valuable. With this caution in mind, I will attempt, in the following section to capture as many ideas as possible that have emerged from various context(s) (and not only Western European) in the world. My argument is that western social work knowledge is not 'more' superior to other forms of knowledge(s) produced from different locales and multiple contexts. Thus while I will engage with western social work knowledge, my attempt is premised on acts of knowing that sees the same as one of many knowledge(s), appreciating western knowledge for what it is in a 'pluriversal' world rather than what it claims to insinuate in a western dominated 'universal' world.

The Changing Context of Social Work Education and Practice

Let me first factor in an argument which I consider imperative to state that is related to the concrete conditions of social work education across various regions of the

world. Social Work Education, in my opinion is now experiencing a tectonic political shift generating some degree of intellectual panic among educators. The shift is not merely theoretical (which is true partially) between conservatives and progressives, but the shift has turned ideological, characterized fundamentally by a historical rupture of perspectives around religious identity, language and nationalist sentiments that are unraveling every moment both in social work education and practice. We observe these historio-philosophical patterns and socio-political shifts erupting in many parts of the globe, with major impact on social work education.

With this concrete condition in mind, it is important to note that social work history is replete with stories of attempts to produce humane innovative knowledge in response to varied context. Social workers across the world and specifically in some regions, as observed post the 1970s, did produced some very sophisticated radical ideas which found its way into the social work curriculum. The situation was also characterized by genuine discussions and sharing of such ideas that did enrich the discipline.

However the production of these ideas and some form of inter-epistemic dialogues that took place between these schools of thought seem to have suddenly taken a back seat. This is (as I have asserted earlier) in the light of the insidious, yet abrupt rise of an overwhelming toxic fear and tension generated by religion, proselytization, identity, nationality, with crass capitalism and brute neo-liberalism as the key stimulant of structural and systemic undercurrents.

As social workers, we now live in very challenging times and as a collective of engaged peoples we are faced with two humongous tasks. First, to make sense of our own self, embedded in very complex political realities and secondly, to try to get some grip of our practice in a world that seems to have lost sight of both the 'good' and the 'beauty'. Contemporary situations are suddenly characterized by a seemingly irresistible onslaught against ecology, endless conflicts, wars, mass displacements of peoples, food and water shortages, extreme poverty, environmental crisis and to top it all the silencing of humane ideas and a backlash against the realization of the collective good.

Evolving Theory in Social Work Education across the Globe: Unveiling Perspectives from Multiple Contexts

Social work history speaks of educators producing and discussing innovative ideas and sharing deep insights about social work practice under multiple frameworks. Theories such as radical social work[23], critical social work[24], structural

[23] Roy Bailey and Mike Brake edited a book 'Radical Social Work' published by Edward Arnold (Publishers) in 1975. They engaged with social work in Britain and the United States. Also read 'Radicals in Social Work' by Daphne Statham (1978) published by Routledge and Kegan Paul. An interesting theoretical analysis and political position of the radical social workers can be captured in the last paragraph of the Case Con Manifesto written by a group of radical social workers who published Case Con magazine in Britain in the early 1970s."Case Con believes that the problems of our 'clients' are rooted in the society in which we live, not in supposed individual inadequacies. Until this society, based on private ownership, profit and the needs of the minority ruling class, is replaced by a workers' state, based on the interests of the vast majority of the population, the fundamental causes of social problems will remain. It is therefore our aim to join the struggle for this workers' state. "

social work[25], marxist social work[26] and feminist social work[27] have abundant literature available for a good read

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24 Please read 'Critical Practice in Social Work' by Robert Adams, Lena Dominelli and Malcolm Payne published by Palgrave in 2002. Also see 'Critical Social Work, An Introduction to Theories and Practice' edited by June Allan, Bob Pease And Linda Briskman (2003) published by Allen & Unwin. An interesting conception is made by Fook, J. (2002) in his book Social work: Critical theory and practice published by Sage Publications. He identifies Critical Social Work as "A postmodern and critical social work practice is primarily concerned with practicing in ways which will further a society without domination, exploitation and oppression. It will focus both on how structures dominate, but also on how people construct and are constructed by changing social structures and relations, recognizing that there may be multiple and diverse constructions of ostensibly similar situations. Such an understanding of social relations and structures can be used to disrupt dominant understandings and structures, and as a basis for changing these so that they are more inclusive of different interest groups."p. 18.

25 Robert Mullaly wrote a very comprehensive book 'Structural Social Work - Ideology, Theory and Practice' (1993) published by McClelland & Steward. Then in the second edition written as Bob Mullaly (1997) 'Structural social work: Ideology, theory and practices' published by Toronto: Oxford University Press, he framed Structural Social Work as "Based on a socialist ideology, located within the radical social work camp, grounded in critical theory, and operating from a conflict view of society, structural social work views social problems as arising from a specific societal context - liberal, neo-conservative capitalism- rather than from the failings of individuals" (p133).

26 Please see the book series "Social Work Practice Under Capitalism - A Marxist Approach" by Paul Corrigan and Peter Leonard (1978) published by Macmillan. In the Introduction to the series, Peter Leonard states the rational for a marxist social work approach to welfare as follows: "In the context of the crisis in the welfare state and the failure of alternative ideologies and theories to explain this crisis (referring to Britain) and the continuation of poverty, deprivation and exploitation, Marxism enters as a method of analysis. The problem is that Marxism is many things, is itself in a state of flux and development, and is subject to highly divergent interpretations. We can see that Marxism is a philosophy which attempts to explain the natural and social world and the place of men and women in it, with particular reference to their role as

creators, with nature, of the social world. On this basis, Marxism is also a critique of the capitalist mode of production in economic and social terms from the nineteenth century to advanced contemporary capitalism. But Marxism is not simply a theory: it is a political practice which confronts capitalism with an alternative model of a social order. The forms that this model takes and the debates which are joined on the best way of achieving them are the basis of the fragmentation within Marxism in Britain. We cannot hope, therefore, to do more than offer some alternative Marxist perspectives in the series (referring to the book series as noted above). We do not intend to indulge in sectarian dogmatism but, rather, to contribute to the development of the debate on the Left about the nature of the welfare state and the possibilities of socialist practice within it." p.xiii – xiv. Another very insightful text is 'Social Work and Received Ideas' by Chris Rojek, Geraldine Peacock and Stewart Collins (1988) published by Routledge. This book touches other interesting perspective such as feminism, humanism and discourse analysis.

27 Mary Langan and Lesley Day wrote an edited book in 1992 on 'Women, oppression and social work, Issues in Anti Discriminatory Practice' published by Routledge. They look at Britain and the patriarchal power relations in all spheres. Also see 'Feminist Social Work Theory and Practice by Lena Dominelli (2002) published by Palgrave Macmillan. In this book Dominelli lays a context for the rise of Feminist Social work noting that "Feminist social work arose out of feminist social action being carried out by women working with women in their communities (Dominelli and McLeod, 1989). Their aim has been to improve women's well-being by linking their personal predicaments and often untold private sorrows with their social position and status in society. This has meant that private troubles have been redefined as matters of public concern". She then attempts a definition of Feminist Social Work as "I define feminist social work as a form of social work practice that takes women's experience of the world as the starting point of its analysis and by focusing on the links between a woman's position in society and her individual predicament, responds to her specific needs, creates egalitarian relations in 'client'–worker interactions and addresses structural inequalities. Meeting women's particular needs in a holistic manner and dealing with the complexities of their lives – including the numerous tensions and diverse forms of oppression impacting upon them, is an integral part of feminist social work. Its focus on the interdependent nature of social relations ensures that it also addresses the needs of those that women interact with – men, children and other women." pp.6-7. Also see the book by Vicky White

for anyone interested in knowing the ideas more deeply. These were followed by very refined social work perspectives like those such as the anti-discriminatory social work[28], anti-racist social work[29], ethnic sensitive[30] and culture sensitive social work[31].

(2006) on 'The State of Feminist Social Work' published by Routledge

28 An important read on the subject is the book 'Key Concepts in Anti-Discriminatory Social Work' by Toyin Okitikpi & Cathy Aymer (2010) published by Sage. In attempting to provide a framework of ADP the authors notes that "Anti-discriminatory practice was developed in response to social work practices that perpetuated discrimination, injustices and inequalities. The calls for an end to oppression and discrimination have a long history which gained some momentum in the 1960s. However, it was not until the 1970s and 1980s that the demands for equality were formulated into an approach that practitioners could attempt to integrate into their work. Anti-discriminatory practice challenged the negative assumptions that were endemic in society regarding race, social class, gender, age, disability and sexual orientation." (p.1) Positing that the seeds of the framework are to be found in the 17th century Western European movement, the authors posits that "Anti-discriminatory practice is about developing a way of working that is not based on bias, prejudices, discrimination, injustice or unfair treatment. It is an approach which calls for people to be treated with respect and holds that people should not be treated badly or unfairly because of their race, gender, sexual orientation, impairment, class (be it middle class or working class), religious belief or age. Apart from how people should be treated, ADP requires a certain degree of introspection in order to be appreciative of the kinds of negative attitudes and beliefs that foster prejudicial views and discriminatory actions that are ultimately manifested in day-to-day practices...Anti-discriminatory practice is based on the notion of social justice and that it is possible to treat people fairly and not view or react negatively towards them as a result of some preconceived ideas." P.26.

29 Please see 'Anti-Racist Social Work' by Lena Dominelli (1997) published by the British Association of Social Workers. In her introduction to the second edition of the book Dominelli notes "Anti-racist perspectives focus on transforming the unequal social relations shaping social interaction between black and white people

Further as many more social workers across the world began to think seriously about the role of knowledge in social work, newer more politically sophisticated ideas also emerged, like anti-oppressive social work[32] in Western

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into egalitarian ones. Additionally, these offer white people hope - hope of changing society in egalitarian directions. In being committed to making racial equality a reality , white people working from an anti-racist perspective can build bridges between themselves and black people working towards the same objective from a black perspective." p.4

30 Located within the American context, the book 'Ethnic-Sensitive Social Work Practice' is written by Wynetta Devore and Elfriede G.Schlesinger (1991) third edition and published by Merill, an imprint of Macmillan Publishing Company. provides important insights into approaches and strategies to work from such a perspective.

31 Please see the chapter of Ling How Kee "The Development of Culturally appropriate Social Work Practice in Sarawak, Malaysia" in 'Indigenous Social Work around the World. Towards Culturally Relevant Education and Practice' edited by Mel Gray, John Coates and Michael Yellow Bird (2008) published by Ashgate.,pp.97-106.

32 For Dominelli (1993) anti-oppressive social work "is a form of social work practice which addresses social divisions and structural inequalities in the work that is done with 'clients' (users) or workers. Anti-oppressive practice aims to provide more appropriate and sensitive services by responding to people's needs regardless of their social status. Anti-oppressive practice embodies a person-centered philosophy, an egalitarian value system concerned with reducing the deleterious effects of structural inequalities upon people's lives; a methodology focusing on both process and outcome; and a way of structuring relationships between individuals that aims to empower users by reducing the negative effects of hierarchy in their immediate interaction and the work they do together." Quoted in Dominelli, L. (1998). Anti-oppressive practice in context. In R. Adams, L. Dominelli and M. Payne. (Eds.), Social Work: Themes, Issues and Critical Debates (pp. 3-22). Houndmills: MacMillan Press Ltd. (p.24) For "Canadian social work, the term "anti-oppressive practice" is generally understood as an umbrella term that encompasses a variety of practice approaches including, but not limited to, radical, structural, feminist, anti-racist, critical, and liberatory frameworks. Therefore, rather than being seen as one

Europe[33] and the North Americas, Black Experience-Based Social Work[34] in America, aboriginal social work[35] and indigenous social work[36] in Canada and Australia

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"practice approach", anti-oppressive social work can be more accurately understood as a stance or perspective toward practice. The term 'anti-oppressive social work' represents the current nomenclature for a range of theories and practices that embrace a social justice perspective." http://aosw.socialwork.dal.ca/index.html Also Please read 'Anti-Oppressive Social Work Theory and Practice' by Lena Dominelli (2002) published by Palgrave Macmillan. Another insightful book on the same perspective is 'Emerging Perspective on Anti-Oppressive Practice' edited by Wes Shera (2003) published by Canadian Scholars' Press Inc. Also read 'Anti-Oppressive Practice, Social Care and the Law' by Jane Dalrymple and Beverley Burke (2006) published by The McGraw-Hill Companies. Also read Siobhan E.Laird book 'Anti-Oppressive Social Work A Guide for Developing Cultural Competence (2008) published by Sage.

33 An insightful Anti Oppressive Social work framework in Britain can be found in the book 'Social Work, Politics and Society From radicalism to orthodoxy' by Kenneth McLaughlin (2008) published by the Policy Press. Also see 'The Politics of Social work' by Fred Powell (2001) published by Sage.

34 Please read 'Social Work and the Black Experience' by Elmer P.Martin and Joanne Mitchell Martin (1995) published by NASW Press.

35 See an interesting conceptualization of 'aboriginal social work' by Cyndy Baskin in article titled "Aboriginal World Views as Challenges and Possibilities in Social Work Education" published by Critical Social Work An Interdisciplinary journal dedicated to social justice. Vol 7 No 2 (2006)

36 Please see 'Indigenous Social Work around the World. Towards Culturally Relevant Education and Practice' edited by Mel Gray, John Coates and Michael Yellow Bird (2008) published by Ashgate. The term 'Indigenous Social Work' is posited as challenge to the universalizing tendencies of 'Western Social Work' which is now being repositioned as 'global social work'. This claim to universality is seen by the authors as "continues to promote professional and cultural imperialism by adhering to its particular universalizing ethical, ideological and political value biases"… instead "Indigenization must be viewed against the historical processes of globalization and colonization"., pp.14-15.

respectively, green social work[37] in Europe, the formulation of Decolonial Social Work[38] from South Asia, South America, Africa and Australasia. We are also now witnessed to even the rise of the perspectives and practice formulations of 'beyond-god religion' such as buddhist social work[39] in the South East Asian regions and countries like Japan and Mongolia. The traditional[40] school in social work have also deepened its knowledge and produced very refined practice frameworks.

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37 Please read 'Social Work Practice, An Ecological Approach' by John T.Pardeck (1996) published by Auburn House. Also see the book 'Green Social Work- From Environmental Crises to Environmental Justice by Lena Dominelli (2012) published by Cambridge

38 Please see 'Social Work in India, Tribal and Adivasi Studies Perspectives from Within' edited by bodhi s.r (2016) published by adivaani. Also an interesting chapter by Linda Briskman on "Decolonizing Social work in Australia: Prospect or Illusion" in 'Indigenous Social Work around the World. Towards Culturally Relevant Education and Practice' edited by Mel Gray, John Coates and Michael Yellow Bird (2008) published by Ashgate.,pp.83-96.

39 Please see 'Towards Buddhist social work and Happiness' by Soontaraporn Techapalokul. Then also visit the initiative of the Asian Research Institute for International Social work at https://www.ariisw.com/home-eng

40 A more traditional (status quoits) social work practice have also, over the years, developed a number of very sophisticated approaches to social work practice. Some of these approaches like the psychodynamic approach, psychosocial approach, the problem-solving approach, the task-centered approach, the systems approach, the life-cycle approach, etc. Most of these have roots in western context but they have also been applied in other settings outside western society.

The Indian Context

In India, social work education began with a Diploma in Social Service Administration,[41] offered by the Sir Dorabji Tata Graduate School of Social Work. Later after India attained its independence from British rule, social work education was theoretically positioned as an informed approach to the 'training of personnel' to give a professional touch to services provided by state and non-state welfare agencies. The thrust of Indian social work post independence was 'reconstructive', build around Gandhi's Constructive Work. Many social work educators during this period were active members of the Indian freedom movement. The responsibility to frame and strengthen welfare agencies and to deepen the 'welfare' component in the new state fell on them. To achieve this purpose, social workers came together in a platform they named the Indian Conference of Social Work (ICSW). The ICSW was envisaged as a platform to discuss, debate and refine models of social welfare interventions with various identified populations.

While not fully out of the American model of social work education[42], both in perspective and content, there was a

41 Rao, V. (1993), Urbanisation, Slum, The State and Self Help Approach: Organisation and Limits to Citizen Participation. Mumbai: Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Tata Institute of Social Sciences.

42 M.C.Nanavatty (1967) notes that "In 1944 'basic' eight areas of studies were adopted in the USA for social work education at the post graduate level. They included the subjects of social case work, social group work, community organization, public welfare, social administration, social research, medical information and psychiatric information. These courses were taught as an integrated training programme with adequate emphasis on field work besides the class

prevailing sense that an element of indigeneity was embodied in the perspectives and practice of professional social work. This was because professional social workers also saw themselves as part of the larger idea of Gandhian Constructive Work. Gandhiji's concept of Constructive Programme[43] is still very influential, although they are beginning to lose the central position that they once occupied for a very long time. Nonetheless while his ideas are starting to lose shine, his spirit still informs most of social work in India. Needless to say that this was not the case on the ground as there was a clear absence of an 'indigenous social work knowledge base' and very miniscule effort was made to invest on developing indigenous knowledge. Despite the influence of Gandhian constructive work,[44] as was the case, a major part of the theoretical

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work and the research project. In 1952, four broad generic sequences of study were evolved, namely, (a) social service policy and programmes; (b) human growth and behaviour; (c) social work methods of social case work, social group work; community organization, social work administration and social work research; and (d) social practice or filed work."

43 The note was first published in 1941 by Navajivan Trust. The revised and enlarged edition published in 1945 has 31pages and contains 18 subjects identified by Gandhiji as fundamental to the Constructive Programme. These are (1)Communal Unity, (2)Removal of Untouchability, (3)Prohibition, (4)Khadi, (5)Other Village Industries, (6)Village Sanitation, (7)New or Basic Education, (8)Adult Education, (9)Women, (10)Education in Health and Hygiene, (11)Provincial Languages, (12)National Language (13)Economic Equality, (14)Kisans, (15)Labour, (16)Adivasis, (17)Lepers and (18)Students. His definition of the Constructive programme is "The constrictive programme may otherwise and more fittingly be called construction of Poorna Swaraj or complete Independence by Truthful and non-violent means" (M.K.Gandhi (1945)Constructive Programme Its Meaning and Place. p.5)

44 In direct relation to social work curriculum, a very intense engagement took place to discuss the ideological foundations of

content of social work education was sourced from western conceptions[45] of professional social work practice. More specifically the American model of social work education was to a great extent replicated in India[46] including the

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social work teaching content in 1967 between Gandhian Constructive Workers and Professional Social workers. A working Group entitled 'Concepts, Contents & Approaches of Professional Social Work & Gandhian Constructive Work' was appointed by the Gandhian Institute of Studies in early 1964. This was an important attempt in the history of social work education to bring together these two groups of social workers. The purpose was to evolve an integrated philosophy of social work for India. The content of the discussions and papers presented was published in Dasgupta, S.(1967), Towards a Philosophy of Social Work in India. New Delhi: Gandhian Institute of Studies, Popular Book Services.

45 These were mostly American frameworks and methods of intervention

46 A.S.Desai (1985) notes in 'The Foundations of Social Work Education in India and Some Issues', that "Dr. J. M. Kumarappa, who became the Director (of TISS) in 1941, visited the U.S.A., after which the generic curriculum shifted to specializations. The social work specializations were all offshoots of the subjects already contained in the first syllabus. Thus, Medical and Psychiatric Social Work was established in 1948 on invitation, by an American social work professional and Family and Child Welfare in 1949 by an American specialist in Child Development. Both were ultimately headed by Indian faculty trained in the U.S.A. The Department of Group Work and Community Organization was established in 1952, headed by an alumnus trained in the U.S.A. With the experience gained in managing the Social Education Organizers' Training Centre at Hyderabad for rural development, which was on the invitation of the Central Government, it was realized that there was no short-cut in the adequate training of social workers. Hence, in 1955, the Institute established the Department of Rural Welfare and a separate Department of Community Organization and Development (for urban areas). In 1959, both of them were merged into the Department of Urban and Rural Community Development."

readings. The linkage between the two contexts – American and Indian was stark'.[47]

Attempts at Indigenization in India

Late into the 1960s several attempts were made by practitioners and educators to indigenize professional social work knowledge base, by drawing perspectives[48] and methodological issues[49] for formulating a context specific "Indian social work". These efforts were scattered across the country and across varied social work domains. Not many attempts were made by social work academics to consolidate such knowledge base. This was made far more difficult by the complexity and diversity of the Indian reality and the difficulty to arrive at a single universal framework of ideas and practice.[50]

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47 Please refer to bodhi s.r (2016) Professional Social Work in India: A Critical View from the Periphery in Social Work in India published by adivaani.

48 Banerjee, G. (1972), Papers in Social Work. An Indian Perspective. TISS Series No.23. Mumbai: Tata Institute of Social Sciences.

49 Beginning around 1960s a new breed of social work educators began thinking seriously about methodology and methods in social work education. Critiques that social work methods were too individual centric and community intervention models were western in essence motivated educators like M.S. Gore (1965), S.Dasgupta (1968), Armaity Desai (1985), H. Siddique (1987), Murli Desai (2004) and even sociologist like Denzil Saldanha (2008) to alter theoretical frames and deepen theoretical connect to the Indian realities.

50 As far as the Indian context is concerned, there is a growing realization among contemporary social work educators and practitioners alike that there cannot be one overarching 'indigenous social work knowledge base'.

Over the years, there have been three official reviews of social work education conducted by the University Grants Commission.[51] The reports of the first two reviews were submitted in 1965 and 1980[52] respectively. The report of the last is still not available.

Contextual and Theoretical Discrepancies in Contemporary Social Work Education

Social work education in India has its intentions and vision in place but always seemed confused about its identity, vision and mission. For instance the biggest debate in social work concerns the professional tag that goes with social work. Even among those who have completed their Post Graduate studies in social work, not all wish to identify themselves as professional social workers. There is a big gap among qualified social workers themselves around identity.

While there are some who hold firmly to the 'professionalism arrived at by educational qualification', the argument goes that there are many more individuals who are highly skilled, very engaged and even more efficacious than qualified social workers even though they do not have any professional degree. Further, many

51 The University Grants Commission is an autonomous Government instituted apex body responsible for education management in India.

52 The Review Committee on Social Work Education in Indian Universities (University Grants Commission, New Delhi, 1965) which was appointed in March, 1960 submitted its report in June, 1965. The Report consists of 64 pages, with 26 additional pages as appendices and titled 'Social Work Education in Indian Universities'. The Second Review Committee constituted in 1975 submitted its Report in 1980 titled 'Review of Social work Education in India'.

structural/community workers are often left out even though their expertise far exceeds those of the professional social workers.[53]

There could be many reasons for the same but two of these, concerns the field of practice and the creation of an educational infrastructure over and above charitable work that is often practiced in India. The first reason relates to social worker's context of work. For those practicing in very organized settings like hospitals, care centers, municipalities, prisons, police stations, etc., the tag of professionalism is imperative. For others outside such settings the professional tag is more a hindrance rather than a boon. The second reason relates to the framing and insertion of an (imported) educational framework coupled with standard and mostly western theoretical content on people's daily practices around charity and welfare in India. This in turn has created a sort of binary between those with a degree and those without one and also contradictions in theoretical content.

Attempts to find reconciliation between these theoretico-structural cleavages have been made, but nothing fundamental has really taken place. To this day, across social work education, western social work formulations are still perceived as superior to other formulations and they

53 On this point as early as 1967 Nagpaul argued that "As the existing system of education is largely unrelated to Indian conditions, social work education needs a radical change and drastic reconstruction" Nagpaul, H. (1967), Dilemmas of Social Work Education in India. Indian Journal of Social Work, Vol.XXVII, No.3 (October).

are conceived as the proper answers to the ills of Indian society.

One of these attempts to correct these discrepancies was made by the second UGC review committee in 1980 which argued for a positional shift from a remedial focus to a more emancipatory development thrust in social work education. The committee believed that social work education in India should be tailored to respond to the issues of systems and structures and thus the needs of the majority 'suffering' population rather than merely focusing on marginalized groups. The understanding was that it was the Indian social structure that was generating mass poverty and suffering and people were a pawn in this exercise. The focus on individuals, individual problems and individual centered solutions, while vital, was not the remedy to the highly complex Indian conditions.

Desai,[54] who was one of the key initiators of the second UGC review committee argued that "professional social work needs to move away from too much dependence on provision of service towards organizing people to promote change, … from institutional to non-institutional programmes, from remedial to those that confront the cause of poverty, from private concerns to public issues, from research with a problem focus to one of action oriented research ... The profession has made a shift but not significant enough".[55] Asserting this same point she

54 Desai, A.(1984), Social Action and The Social Work Curriculum. In H. Siddique, Social Work and Social Action: A Developmental Perspective (pp. 65-85). New Delhi: Harnam Publications.

55 Ibid.

noted in another article 'The Foundations of Social Work Education in India and Some Issues', where she argued, "another issue of importance, to a third world country, is the emphasis in the curriculum either on poverty and social change, or, the remedial and rehabilitative model of social welfare. Unfortunately, our models have been the latter, borrowed as they were from the first world countries".[56]

Contradictions between the 'Conservatives' and the 'Progressives'

There is an interesting debate taking place in India within the social work educator's fraternity, the age old debate that we observe across the globe between the 'conservative' and the 'progressive'. While the 'progressive' sees the 'conservative' as status quoist, anti-change, individual centric, problem focused, atheoretical and pedestrian in understanding the role of power in social interplay, the 'conservatives' on the other hand sees the 'progressive' as too theoretical, unnecessarily political, critical, disruptive, not concerned with measurable outcome and above all else, too driven by narrow ideology.

Interestingly though, within such a milieu there is not much to count in terms of indigenous knowledge production. There are very less social work books in India and among those available the writings have tendencies to define, classify, compare and explain, rather than problematise, debate, disturb and transform. A few noteworthy texts that require much thinking and reflections have been written by

56 Desai, A. (1985), Foundations of Social Work Education in India and Some Issues. Indian Journal of Social Work , Vol.46 (1). p.41-57.

critical social workers. However because of the heavy dominance of 'conservatives' in social work education, these texts do not find space either in theoretical content nor reading references. The attempt of conservative social work educators has been to silence and invisibilise these texts in the name of theoretical standard which is often measured by indicators that are fundamentally 'western'. While supposedly 'radical' 'received theories' like those of Lina Dominelli and even Robert Mullaly will be taught to students, text that speaks about the concrete Indian conditions are negated. There is a conscious attempt to invisibilise critical indigenous text. The reasons are not far to seek. It is always easier to speak about others (especially western) that have nothing to do with one's own (Indian) reality and always difficult to speak about one's own context for fear of being exposed, confronted and challenged. In other words, there is an unconscious belief among educators that if you do not speak openly about a 'concrete condition' (for instance caste) then it is not there, and those who do so are unnecessarily raking up non-existent issues. This all-pervasive conception stands antithetical to all that social work attempts to realize. Such is the state of Indian social work and the axiological crisis that most Indian social work educators are faced with.

Most progressive social workers in India are wary of the perils of traditional social work and its role in augmenting and maintaining the status quo. The 'conservative' is always a perfect being, the problem lies 'out there' among the numerously abundant suffering 'other' that constitutes of the 'lazy poor', the 'not so hardworking meritless people',

the 'non-deserving reserved category', 'the unfortunate vernacular speaker', and many such 'pitiable creatures'. This thorough lack of insight into the oppressive nature of its theoretical premise, coupled with a lackadaisical attitude towards any form of humane introspection of itself has fueled the status quo. This attitude has led to a near total intellectual impoverishment and has had severe ramifications on knowledge production in social work.

These tensions among the 'conservative school' and the 'progressive school' are found everywhere in India. Initially the debate was identified in the theoretical domain as a struggle between the remedial (individual) and the development (community) perspectives.[57] However, as this debate progressed, the theoretical tussle is now being framed and articulated as a debate between the 'clinical' (individual focus) and 'discursive' (anti-caste, pro-women, indigenous social work and buddhist[58]) schools.[59]

The 'individual focus' position is theoretically located within an overarching dominant framework couched in a somewhat acritical, ahistorical and non-discursive (common sense) language, fundamentally seeing social work as a

57 As pointed by the second UGC review committee 1980

58 My reference to the word 'Buddhist' here is not sourced from the western european conception of Buddhism which was a Christian construct of a very unique framework that constitutes of three intertwined open-ended concepts buddha-dhamma-sangha. My reference in this particular text is to the way this word is understood in India and not the way Western Europeans have constructed the same.

59 The 'community' perspective seems to have got lost somewhere in the complex alleys of 'liberals who are radicals' world.

profession of clinicians and service providers whose primary role is the 'correction of deviants' augmented deeply by a collective imposition of a somewhat distorted moral duty of charity for those who are in the periphery.

The discourse oriented school, on the other hand, stress on the structurally oppressive elements embedded in the clinical/individual perspective, the de-contextualized models and strategies of field intervention, the ahistorical nature of clinical analysis and the non-discursive comprehension of Indian social reality. The discursive school resents the appropriation of social work education by those grounded on a clinical/individual view of Indian society and struggles to nudge the premise of social work epistemology towards more emancipatory and liberatory points-of-view.

The Emergence of Organic and Contextual Theory in Social Work

There are many new ideas that have emerged in social work that engages with structure, systems, history and discourse. Noteworthy among them from the perspective of knowledge production are those formulated around two social categories – dalits[60] and tribes[61]. About the word

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60 My understanding is based on a number of discussions with my colleague Dr.Shaileshkumar Darokar with who I co-teach a course on Caste Movements in India, Also my own students have given so many insights and enriched my own conception further. For a more sublime understanding, please refer to Gopal Guru's 'Understanding the Category Dalit' in Atrophy in Dalit Politics, Intervention 1. pp.63-76.

61 The concept 'Tribe' is now being debated among those communities identified as such. The category intersects with the Indian State's

'Dalit' I trace its conception to the radical humanist movements called 'Dalit Panthers' that erupted in Maharashtra during the 1970s. Sourced from this movement I use the concept 'Dalit' here to refer to peoples who have asserted and are committed to the following political position: (i) Is upfront against the practice of untouchability (ii) Has courage to assert publicly that untouchability is inhuman and wrong (iii) Rejects the exonym 'harijan' which is seen as an imposition on their being (iv) Reclaims the agency to write and produce one's own knowledge about self, community and society (v) Claims the innate human right to own one's body (vi) Claims the social right to own physical property (vii) Asserts the claim to human freedom and social liberty in society. Further, these assertions historically emerged from peoples of those collectivities in which the most brutal form of untouchability was practiced on the whole community. The concept 'Dalit' was born out of their struggle for emancipation. Thus the category 'Dalit' specifically refers to those who have taken the above positions within these communities. Such is the power generated by the movement that whole communities are now identified as Dalit even though empirically there are ex-untouchable communities that prefer not to identify with the category produced by the Dalit Panthers. From this point-of-view, the category 'Dalit' is a political position, a perspective, an epistemology and a social philosophy

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categorization of certain societies as 'Scheduled Tribe'. The concept 'tribe' being an exonym, not many are aware of this identity and prefer to identify themselves by their community (endonym) name.

strategically positioned to counter the system of untouchability.

About the word 'tribe', viewed from a pan-India perspective, am using the same to refer to all the small non-caste indigenous communities in India who, I assert, are methodological communities complete with their own ontology, epistemology, logic and axiology. However the word has a very complicated history[62] in itself, and in India it is not without controversy. While many communities in North East India have taken the identity of 'tribe' as referring to their communities, the indigenous communities in central India prefer using another exonym call 'Adivasi' and the peoples inhabiting their historical lands of Tripura prefer calling themselves 'indigenous peoples'. My attempt here is not to fix these communities in a singular frame but mostly to try and capture the pan India identity of these small non-caste indigenous communities inhabiting their own historical lands in India that are also recognized by the Indian Constitution.

[62] Post 1492, with the rise of Spanish colonialism, the word tribe was insidiously altered to fundamentally refer to non-humans/sub-humans that needed to be civilized. In this colonial project, tribal epistemicide was a key imperative. Colonialist to this very day take pride in having demeaned and destroyed 'tribal' epistemology(s), whilst using the same category – 'tribe', as a mirror image to comprehend their own societies. The reproduction of this colonial imagery continued unabated, and the savagery notions embedded in the concept travelled far and wide. Around the mid 1700s, it entered the hierarchy bound social imagination of the dominant caste populace of Indian society(s) through the british, who began reproducing the mirror narrative of the earlier colonizers. The repercussions of the 1492 conception reverberate to this very day across the socio-political spectrum world-wide.

Viewed from the lens of discourse, both Dalits and Tribes in their historical struggle for emancipation from their differential epistemic positions have given rise to a new social work – Anti-Caste Social Work[63] and Tribal Social Work.[64] These theoretical frameworks resonate with the

63 The first substantive paper that emerged in social work education formulated on a distinct anti-caste social work premise is by A.Ramaiah in 1996 as I had pointed in chapter 1. His paper which is now accepted as a pioneer in asserting the anti-caste episteme. Before this, M.S.Gore, a professional social worker and ex-Director of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai also published his book "The Social Context of an Ideology: Ambedkar's Social and Political Thoughts" in 1993, where he discusses the anti-caste ideas of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar which till then was considered an anathema in social work education. No real impact on social work education was made even after the publication of his book. For more insights on the debates concerning anti-caste social work please see Rao.V & Waghmore.S (2007). Special Issue- Dalits and Development: A Reappraisal, Indian Journal of Social Work Volume 68, (1), Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. Also refer to bodhi s.r(2016) "Dalit Social Work: Reading Its Theory from a Tribal Location" in 'Social Work in India'., (Edited) published by adivaani, Kolkata pp.397-414.

64 Beginning 2004, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, unveiled a "Draft National Tribal Policy" for consultation with various stakeholders. On 21 July, 2006 the Ministry released its revised draft "National Tribal Policy". While the document details processes related to history, approaches and key development sectors, the identified strategy for engaging with the tribes in all realms was laid down as being "Tribe Centric". Following this formulation by the Ministry, The Tata Institute of Social Sciences which was going through a Restructuring of its curriculum, formulated various courses premised on the Ministry's identified strategy and introduced a concentration (that is, set of courses) called Tribe Centered Social Work Practice. Tribe centered social work locates social work intervention as an organic process of working with and through tribes, and accepts the relevance and efficacy of endogenous methodologies as having the capability to explain, protect, preserve and promote tribes. Also see bodhi s.r (2016) 'Tribal Social Work: Reflections on its Philosophical Foundations' in Social Work in India (Edited) published by adivaani, Kolkata. pp.415-429.

need to express, assert and augment their efforts towards liberty and equality. These, I wish to argue, are the social work formulations that are the first genuine attempts of the indigenization and resurrection of social work in India on progressive lines.

Historically, A.Ramaiah (1998)[65] is credited with being the first to provide a theoretical frame for conceiving an anti-caste social work premise arguing for a need to directly engage with the questions of caste in India. Ramaiah noted in his seminal article, that Indian professional social work for ignoring caste and argued that most professional social workers were inherently caste prejudiced. He suggested that Social workers need to seriously consider de-casting themselves. Social work was not free from caste and could not operate from outside its social structure. Both social work education and social workers were subsumed in caste. He argued that "no social work practice paradigm could contribute meaningfully and make any real dent on the marginalized till the same is first accomplished. Anti-Caste social work was conceived as a theoretical position that fundamentally rejects the structure of graded inequality based on purity/pollution which is intrinsically linked to caste and descent. It proposes a social work practice that challenges and emancipates people from this graded system

65 A.Ramaiah's article 'The Plight of Dalits: A Challenge to Social Work Profession', was published in the two volume book on 'Towards a People Centered Development, Part I & II., Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, edited by Narayan, Monteiro and Lingam (1998). pp.124-146.

of the 'pure touchable' and the 'polluted untouchable'."[66] Following A.Ramaiah's initial framework, Dalit Social Work[67] (DSW) emerged as a distinct theoretical social work domain. More advance formulation of the same idea has now moved to what is identified as Navayana Social Work.[68].

From a theoretical perspective, DSW resonates theoretico-philosophically with other social work frameworks like Anti-Racist, Black, Feminist, Critical, Radical and Structural Social Work that emerged in varied contexts such as Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom.

Tribal Social Work (TSW) however was a theoretical product of the team in the School of Social work in the Tata Institute of Social Sciences. Linked with the TICI that has its own academic journal,[69] the framework of TSW is an

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66 bodhi s.r (2016) 'Social Work education in India: A Critical View from the Periphery' in Social Work in India (Edited) published by adivaani, kolkata.p.237-238

67 The Indian Journal of Dalit and Tribal Social Work began publishing in the year 2012 and contain a number of articles related to the subject domain of Dalit Social Work. Dalit Social Work is now also a course for Master's students pursuing their M.A in Dalit and Tribal Studies and Action in the Tata Institute of Social Sciences. Also see bodhi s.r (2016) Dalit Social Work: Reading its Theory from a Tribal Location' in Social Work in India (Edited) published by adivaani, Kolkata. pp.397-414.

68 I will engage with this idea in greater details in the seventh chapter of this book. Here it suffice to state that the word Navayana means 'New Vehicle', an idea proposed by Dr.B.R.Ambedkar who sourced the same from the deep rooted conceptions about 2500 year ago in India by Siddhato Gotamo.

69 Their journal is called the 'Journal of the Tribal Intellectual Collective India' available in www.ticijournals.org. This journal is the first of its kind produced collectively by academics from the tribal/adivasi community in India under the Tribal Intellectual Collective India.

epistemological equivalent to decolonial social work rooted to the Indian context. Fundamental to TSW is what is posited as 'perspectives from within' around two conceptions of the nature of social reality – diversity and dialogue.[70]

Conclusion

I have had a number of opportunities to engage with curriculum formulation in India. One thing that I have observed across discussions and debates about curriculum within social work is the difficulty in identifying areas and fields of intervention. Social work has tendencies towards less political fields of practice rather than those that have politics embedded in the nature of the issue. Nonetheless, there is an understanding emerging across educators, even though there are newer regressive traditionalist formulations arising as on 2019 that social work education must incorporate theoretical conceptualizations and engage more truthfully with fundamental socio-political-economic issues that dictate the social landscape of India.

On this count there have been a number of very important seminars among educators to discuss social work curriculum in India. Only a few however counts as significant and creative. These are: the gathering in 1967 between Gandhian Constructive Workers and Professional Social workers in the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, and

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There has not been such attempts before to bring tribal/adivasi academics in one platform.

70 For a deeper understanding of these concepts please refer to the Edited book – Social Work in India, Tribal and Adivasi Studies Perspectives from within published by adivaani, Kolkata in 2016

the workshop in 1996 in TISS on 'People-Centered Development'. To augment processes related to curriculum, the UGC did set up a social work education cell to deepen and expand social work knowledge. However, needless to state, that even with such attempts there is still a lack of indigenous social work knowledge to this day.

Chapter III

Theorizing the 'field' in Indian Social Work Education and Practice: Reassembling Conceptions from a Critical Perspective[71]

We are soldiers but we are the battle (field) too...: Anonymous

Enveloped by massive change processes since the late 1960s, characterized by mass upheavals and radical overhauling of structural realities, India is experiencing rapid change in every domain. The predominant overarching framework that once determined the country's lived realities have witnessed contestations within various politico-geographical spaces, and in various other socio-historical spheres there are even violent struggles and revolutionary assertions. Over this period of time, social work education has remained alive to these tumultuous changes and has sometimes even tried responding to each of these contextual realities. In engaging with these realities, it conceived the dynamic context through the notion of a 'field'.

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71 I wrote this note as early as 2008. Over the years I have use this as a teaching material when I engage on the concept of 'field' with my students in the TISS. One of the key reasons I wrote this note was to engage in the debate regarding the identification of the 'Fields of Practice' in social work education. I attempted through this note to rupture and destabilize set notions of what constitutes a 'field' which till that moment was embedded in the worldview of the 'specializations' in social work. I had published this note in an edited book on Social Work in India published by adivaani. I thank the Tribal Intellectual Collective India for allowing the republication of this article.

In this chapter I attempt to engage with several questions related to social work's conception of the notion 'field'; what does this category signify within contemporary social work education? What are its constitutive elements? Is there political interplay involved in construction process? Is it possible to conceive this category differently and would this allow the telling of a different story about social work education and practice. Through the process of historicizing, I engage with these questions in ways that are eclectic yet critical, and as an output of the exercise I hope to be able to reassemble the meaning of the category '*field*', locating the same in current context.

At the outset it is important that some basic observations be made about social work theorizing. It is seen in contemporary social work education and practice that some of the key recurring overarching discursive themes are conceptions such as *field, theory/action*, and *ethics/values*. While there have been some serious thinking around the domain of *theory/action* and to a certain extent on *ethics/values*, the category *field* has been somewhat left unattended. This is at best because of the dynamic and fluid nature of the reality that the category purports to contextually and temporarily represent and at worst simply because social work educators have not dared to venture into this domain for reasons more political than academic.

A critical cross sectional peep into what meaning the concept *field* holds at this historical juncture reveals that the same is under a sound theoretical grip of traditional and

traditionalist social workers.[72] The concept is conceived in a 'taken for granted manner', couched in a somewhat atheoretical language, very generic in meaning with underlying methodological assumptions that every one already knows what *'field'* connotes. Thus any act that furthers problematization of the said category is unnecessary and unwarranted. This is the status of the debate pertaining to the category as it stands today within social work education.

In revisiting the concept *field*, I would posit various arguments that would unravel this political interplay of how traditionalist has disallowed any revisiting and reassembling of the concept. I begin by tracing the socio-historical processes that shaped these conceptions and culminate in a reformulation of the category *field* vis. social work education, hoping to enrich Tribal and Adivasi studies in the process.

Understanding the Category *Field*

A category has the power to explain, and within the context of social work practice, it is historically constituted and theoretically arrived at before it is used within the frames of practice and educational programmes. Over time, while some categories often become flattened and lose much of their analytic rigor plus representative ability, some

[72] Traditionalist social workers here refers to those who have held the reigns of social work since its inception in India having relied heavily on Western / American conceptions of social work and those who engages with social change from a commonsensical understanding of society rather than relying on more informed theoretical frameworks.

categories go through a heuristic[73] increase and of overall usage. The value of a category is greatly determined by perpetual critical contestations of varied perspectives allowing for new ways of seeing, meaning and interpretation. In social work practice, the purpose of a category is not only to define and unravel a context with precision, but also to facilitate the drawing of clear boundaries that would allow an abstract theoretical delineation for informed action and reflection.

This is very much akin to most categories used in social work education especially while identifying key components of teaching and practice. For any critical social work educator, the category *'field'* constitutes one of the central concepts in the formulation of the overall curriculum framework. Most politico-historical contestations among social workers also happen over intricate elements that constitute the category *field*. Curriculum sub-concepts such as 'fields of practice', 'field work', 'field context', 'field supervision', 'field engagement', 'field action', 'field visits', etc, are formulated, attached with or build upon the category *field*. This central definitive space occupied by the category 'field' in most social work curriculum with direct implications for professional identity is also derived from varied definitions and articulation of how the *field* is conceived, demarcated and positioned to represent the discipline within larger societal context.

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73 Heuristic increase is positioned to mean 'enabling a person to discover or learn something more about a concept by and for themselves'

Field as Conceptualized in the Social Sciences

Historically, and up to the present, the notion '*field*' remains a highly contentious category across social and humanistic disciplines. Attempts at uncovering conceptions of the notion within each social science discipline are fraught with difficulty. However for the specific purpose of this chapter, a broader understanding that would hold ground for the social sciences would be adopted.

The subject matter of the social sciences generally concerns society and its constitutive elements: nature, people, organizations, structures and systems. Anthropology constructs the notion *field* as a demarcated physical space outside one's own culture.[74] It studies people from cultures that are totally different, outside of one's own and explores other worlds, where lives unfold according to different understandings of the natural order of things. Anthropologist generally travels to every corner of the globe to conduct their research. The goal of observing while participating is to find ways to enter other peoples' worlds, to learn their language, follow their lifestyle as far as possible for an extended period and allow social interaction to unfold in a natural way while recording such processes.

Sociology perceives the *field* as located within the framework of society and its structure. Any phenomena within the broad confines of society that can be studied empirically are identified as a *field*. This would include self, situation, structure and system. Whether reality is outside of

74 Mcgee,R, Jon & Warms, Richard,L. (2008) Anthropological Theory , An Introductory History. McGraw Hill

us or within us would depend on theoretical perceptions that conceive reality as either mind independent or mind dependent.

Cultural studies perceive the field as being in a state of perpetual flux located loosely in a circuit of experience that is situated in some order. '*Meaning*', in cultural studies, is generated and constructed within relationships defined by the production and consumption process, and various such meanings are invoked through the notional framework of the universal and the particular.

Within the social sciences, perspectives and ideology are conceived as fundamental. For Marxist theorists,[75] central to their vision of a *field* is the foundational assumption that nature, history and living beings fit together to comprise a totality. Since humans emerged from, continue to depend on and are also intrinsically capacitated to transform nature, human history as a science is perceived as incomplete until this foundation is fully comprehended. The idea that nature has a history, that species come into existence, change and disappear through natural processes (as the idea that capitalism isn't eternal, but came into being at a given time and will one day disappear from the earth), is how the

75 Engels F, 1884; Brooks. M, 2002; Ian Angus, 2009 Ian Angus (2009). Marxs, Engels and Darwin how darwin's theory of evolution confirmed and extended the most fundamental concepts of Marxism. A Socialist Voice pamphlet. Also see Brooks.M (2002). What is Historical Materialism?- A Study Guide with Questions, extracts and suggested readings. http://www.marxist.com/historical-materialism-study-guide.htm In Defense of Marxism. Engels.F (1884). The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State.

http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1884/origin-family/

dynamic *field* is conceived. According to the Marxian materialistic conception, the determining factor in history is, in the final instance, the production and reproduction of the immediate essentials of life. This is characterized as being twofold. On the one side, the production of the means of existence, of articles of food and clothing, dwellings, and of the tools necessary for that production; and on the other side, the production of human beings themselves through the propagation of the species. The social organization under which the people of a particular historical epoch and a particular country live is determined by both kinds of production: by the stage of development of labor on the one hand and of the family on the other. It is on such historical underpinnings that action and reflection takes place.

For post structuralist on the other hand, the category *field* refers to a conception of a social space, where there are interactions, transactions and events occurring that are located in a specific historical and local / national /international and relational contexts. This *field* also requires an interrogation of the ways in which previous knowledge about the object under investigation had been generated, by whom, and whose interests were served by those knowledge generation practices.

In the works of Bourdieu, the *field* was to assume an increasingly significant aspect. A *field*, in Bourdieu's conception, is a social arena within which struggles or maneuvers take place over specific resources or stakes and access to them. Fields are defined by the resources which are at stake—cultural goods (life-style), housing, intellectual

distinction (education), employment, land, power (politics), social class, prestige or whatever—and may be of differing degrees of specificity and concreteness.[76] For him[77] a field is by definition, 'a field of struggles' in which agents' strategies are concerned with the preservation or improvement of their positions with respect to the defining capital of the field. A *field* is a structured system of social positions—occupied either by individuals or institutions—the nature of which defines the situation for their occupants. It is also a system of forces which exist between these positions; a field is structured internally in terms of power relations. Positions stand in relationships of domination, subordination or equivalence (homology) to each other by virtue of the access they afford to the goods or resources (capital) which are at stake in the field. These goods can be principally differentiated into four categories: economic capital, social capital (various kinds of valued relations with significant others), cultural capital (primarily legitimate knowledge of one kind or another) and symbolic capital (prestige and social honor).

In Indian Sociology there are very less debates about the notion *field*. The only available writings surround methodological approaches that are formulated around two views of conceiving Indian reality; the 'field-view' and

76 As cited in Jenkins.R, (1992)

77 P.Bourdieu, (1990).In Other Words, Cambridge, Polity. Also see P.Bourdieu, (1991) Language and Symbolic Power, Cambridge, Polity. Also see Jenkins.R (1992). Pierre Bourdieu. Routledge and L.D.Wacquant,(1989) 'Towards a Reflexive Sociology: A Workshop with Pierre Bourdieu, Sociological Theory, Vol.7

'book view'. Jodhka's[78] article 'From Book View to Field View: Social Anthropological Constructions of the Indian Village' brings out varied contestations related to approaches of studying Indian villages. Within the framework of these propositions the 'field view' generally refers to the lived and shared experiences of people from the *field*, which one seeks to comprehend and interpret, and the 'book view' of Indian society is framed around texts developed by indologists – generally sourced from classical Hindu scriptures and colonial ethnography.

For the purpose of this chapter, the Indian debate within social science is interesting on two counts (i) most Indian social scientists assume they already know what the *field* is and (ii) this *field* is generally always outside the researcher and conceived as being contained in some way in the realities of 'the other'.[79]

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78 Jodhka.S. (1998). From 'Book-View' to 'Field-View': Social Anthropological: Constructions of the Indian Village', Oxford Development Studies, Vol. 26 (3). Pp. 311-32. 1998.

79 It comes naturally to most Brahmin social scientists to study and theorise about Dalits and Tribes, never occurring to them why this proclivity. Political theorist Gopal Guru in his article 'How Egalitarian are the Social Sciences in India?', detailed how this process has been so deeply entrenched in the minds of Indian social scientists and so easily accepted by Dalits, Tribes and OBCs in India. Applying the egalitarian principle to Indian social sciences, Guru contested the idea that some are born with a theoretical spoon in their mouth while the vast majority with an empirical pot around their neck. While Guru problematised these processes to a great degree and provided new direction to understanding and doing social sciences in India, the struggle by 'empirical Shudras' to emancipate social sciences from the grip of 'theoretical Brahmins' in India has only recently begun.

De-familiarizing the *Field* in Social Work Education and Practice from across Continents

While the main focus of the chapter is on India, it is important to get a glimpse of social work realities across various other regions of the world. The history of social work in the United Kingdom throws interesting insights into how the notion *field* came to be conceptualized in the said country. Based on the assumptions that the risk of social disorder by the year 1601 due to desperation and need were so great as to warrant action by the state, the Elizabethan Poor Law was enacted. The law authorized the raising of taxes to pay for services to those who were poor, needy, and had no family support, assigning them to assistance as follows: the 'impotent poor' (the aged, chronic sick, blind, and mentally ill who needed residential care) were to be accommodated in voluntary almshouses; the 'able-bodied' poor were to be set to work in a workhouse (they were felt to be able to work but were lazy); the 'able-bodied poor' who ran away or 'persistent idlers' who refused to work were to be punished in a 'house of correction'.[80]

The *field* was conceived based on the notion of poverty demarcated around the deserving and non deserving poor. Over the years when social work schools emerged they were encouraged to emphasize efficiency and standards in

[80] Fraser, 1984, in Cree, 2002: 277. Social Work and Society. In M. Davies (Ed.), The Blackwell Companion to Social Work (2nd ed., pp. 277-287). Oxford, U.K.: Blackwell.

an environment of "hard-nosed concerns about cost".[81] While there were contestations to these formulation by radical social workers in the 70s and 80s the concept of a *field* was taken for granted as being out there framed around the idea of poverty. This has remained so to this day. The influential Barclay Report (1982), illustrated the emerging tensions of the 1960s and 1970s but stressed more on roles of social workers and management aspects. However it must be noted that in the same report there were two minority reports stressing on approaches instead of roles; one advocating a broad community work approach and the other a highly professionalized casework approach.[82]

In the United States of America social work began with the first US settlement house in 1886, modeled on earlier efforts in the UK. They were established with a goal of eliminating the distance between socioeconomic classes by locating housing for the poor in working class neighborhoods. Settlement houses initially provided day nurseries for working mothers, health clinics, and classes in dance, drama, art, and sewing.[83] The notion *field* was framed on similar grounds as those in the United Kingdom.

Over the years, social work became more politicized and, rather than looking down on the poor or assuming that by setting a superior example the problems of the poor would

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81 Elliott, D., & Walton, R. G. (1995). United Kingdom. In T. D. Watts & D. Elliott & N. S. Mayadas (Eds.), International Handbook on Social Work Education (pp. 123- 144). London: Greenwood Press.

82 Elliott &Walton,1995: 133(ibid)

83 Van Wormer, K. (2003). Social Welfare: A World View. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth

be resolved, they began to focus on the needs and desires of those with whom they were working through advocacy and social change. Jane Addams was quoted to have stated:

> 'We found ourselves spending many hours in efforts to secure support for deserted women, insurance for bewildered widows, damages for injured (machinery) operators, furniture from the clutches of the installment store. The settlement… constantly acts between the various institutions of the city and the people for whose benefit these institutions were erected'[84]

It was only in the 1900 that the term "social workers" was used, supposedly coined by Simon Patten, who disputed with Mary Richmond whether their major role should be social advocacy or the delivery of individual services. Throughout the history of social work in the United States of America there are rare moments when the profession as a whole had reassembled its basic conception of field. There are exceptions in the 1960s and 1970s and even as late as 2000s when many social work educators and practitioners revisited the conception. However there have been no major radical shift and the conception of *field* in America remains very much the same.

In South America, on the other hand, there have been numerous efforts to reconceptualize the *field*. These processes were captured in a 1971 statement from the United Nations on training for social welfare that brought to light the tension between 'struggling within existing

84 Jane Addams, 1910, in Van Wormer, 2003: 165)

systems' and 'working to change them'. The statement reads:

> Social work, and consequently social welfare, must be freed from dependence on imported conceptions and techniques; it must further revolutionary change in social structures and power relationships, rather than limit itself to helping its clienteles to function better with a non-viable social environment.[85]

Between the mid-1960s and the mid-1970s, acknowledged as the 'reconceptualization' period, South America stopped searching for answers from Europe and the United States and instead engaged in the discovery of its own authentic potential to become a free continent.[86] From this shift, two basic schools of thought emerged: the functionalist and the historical-materialist.[87]

Functionalist social workers built their premise around the notion of the achievement of social equilibrium by attempting to eliminate social problems and dysfunctions, while historical-materialist social workers conceived a struggle against oppression and forces of marginalization as their most fundamental objective. The concept of

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85 Resnick, R. P. (1995). South America. In T. D. E. Watts, Doreen;Mayadas, Nazneen S. (Ed.), International Handbook on Social Work Education (pp. 65-86). London: Greenwood Press. Also see Queiro-Tajalli, I. (1995). Argentina. In T. D. E. Watts, Doreen;Mayadas, Nazneen S. (Ed.), International Handbook on Social Work Education (pp. 87-102). London: Greenwood Press.

86 Queiro-Tajalli, I. (1995). Agentina. In T.D.E. Watts, Doreen; Mayadas, Nazneen S. (Ed.), International Handbook on Social Work Education (pp. 87-102). London: Greenwood Press.

87 Resnick, 1995 (ibid)

'conscientization' as formulated by the educator Paulo Friere became their fundamental theoretical premise. Within these varied contestations the *field* was conceived not as being contained in the poor but as embedded in structure.

Across the globe in Australia, social work intervention was influenced primarily by the USA model till the mid 1960s and thereafter British models became influential.[88] The major *fields* of social work intervention today include ageing, refugees, child protection and domestic violence. While the *field* was taken for granted as being 'out there', there was far more stress on case work especially in the hospital setting and relief for families experiencing distress in the community setting. There have been many interesting writings on Radical Social Work emerging from Australia; however there has not been any fundamental change in its basic conception as is the case with the United Kingdom and United States of America.

If we turn to South Africa which offered its first social work diploma course in 1924 the theoretical trends were quite similar to United Kingdom. However the 'White Paper for Social Welfare' brought out in 1997 cleared the direction for social work practice in South Africa to a great degree. It wanted the profession to redefine and locate the *fields* of engagement and practice within a context of micro and macro issues that constitute poverty, unemployment,

88 Phillips, R. and Irwin, J. (2005), 'The Social, Political and Practice Context for Social Work in Australia', Present and Future of Social Work in Asia-Pacific Countries, Korea Association of Social Workers: Seoul

aging, human rights, children's rights, immigration, refugees, HIV/AIDS, illiteracy, trauma resulting from violent crime especially rape, murder, child abuse, sexual assault and etc.

Conception of *field* in India before 1936

I. Context

Social work education in India celebrated its platinum jubilee in the year 2011. Over seventy five years of its existence, social work has viewed the *field* in various ways. Prior to 1936, when British India held sway, the conception of social work was determined by the social condition existing, created by number of international and national situations. One was related to the great economic depression worldwide that occurred during 1928-1932 whose main impact was a sharp reduction in the sale of raw cotton, jute and ground nuts in the International commodity markets. During this period, prices for Indian exports fell about forty percent. In Mumbai (erstwhile Bombay) the cotton manufacturing industry closed about a quarter of its mills by 1931. On the political front the year 1935 was defined by the passage of the Government of India Act, 1935 in 4 June. This Act provided for: the separation of Burma's administration from India, the creation of Sind, Orissa and the North-West Frontier Province as separate provinces, the establishment of provincial autonomy with ministerial responsibilities, provision for a Federation with division of powers, the retention of separate electorates in accordance with the Communal Award and a demarcation of scheduled areas

into excluded and partially excluded. Most of these scheduled areas were those inhabited by Tribal communities.

During this phase, the socio political context was labile and any activity that seems to qualify as social work, conceived the *field* within the paradigm of welfare; inclusive of structures, services, delivery systems and recipients. This paradigm was very much within the bounded conceptual frame of colonial anthropology under the control and patronage of British imperialism. Colonial anthropology was under the methodological grip of what was commonly known as nineteen century evolutionism which framed society and cultures within a comparative method under a broad conception known as psychic unity (referring to an understanding that all human brains work similarly). Society was supposed to progress though parallel but independent evolutionary stages posited as being from simple to complex and primitive to civilized. Here the Victorian society was represented as the highest currently extant form of civilization. Anthropologists' understanding of the myriad artifacts they collected or the events they recorded in the field was to a great extent defined by and derived from these theoretical perspectives.[89] It was within such perspectives and frameworks that social work was greatly confined.

89 Mcgee,R, Jon & Warms, Richard,L. (2008) Anthropological Theory , An Introductory History. McGraw Hill

II. **Social Work Activities**

During the first quarter of the twentieth century, a few organizations in India started social work training in order to study social problems and to seek scientific solutions for the same: Servants of India Society, Social Service League in Bombay, etc. The Social Service League of Bombay started a short term training course in the year 1920 for voluntary workers engaged in social welfare activity. And in 1936 the Sir Dorabji Tata Graduate School of Social Work was set up in Bombay.

Over time, the generic curriculum that was emphasized in the pre-independence period (1936-46) developed to deepen practice through the concept of specializations, which include medical and psychiatric social work, family and child welfare, criminology and correctional administration, group work and community organization, and labor welfare and industrial relations. Shaped by priorities established in the United States, the emphasis was on curative social casework, with less attention to needs of social and economic development, or the promotion of prevention services and social action. The *field,* during this period was generally conceived as a context outside of British and various comprador class realities. The passive recipients of welfare (generally the poor Indians) were more specifically identified as being the *field.* In this sense, the *field* was framed so as to constitute the welfare structure, the personnel delivering the welfare services and the recipients of welfare. This was the overarching framework of the conception in which the first social work institute in the country was conceived, formulated and posited.

Conception of *field* in India after 1936

The first school of social work was set up in a very hostile environment. 'Nationalist' uprising against British rule was gaining momentum and increased tensions with trade unions, partly related to the fallout from the great depression were taking place. Clifford Manshardt, an American Protestant missionary, who had graduated in theology from the University of Chicago was appointed its first Director. He came to India in 1925 through the American Marathi mission, a Protestant Christian organization. This organization had decided to undertake work in 'slums' and with that objective founded the Nagpada Neighborhood House in 1926. The agency was formulated on lines of the 'Settlement House' in America. Identifying poverty, gambling, prostitution, beggary, etc as social problems, they were perceived as being caused by the tumultuous changes in social structure especially related to the breaking up of the family and 'community'. Manshardt mooted the idea of developing a school of social work to meet the need for trained manpower to work in such conditions. With financing from the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, the Sir Dorabji Tata Graduate School of Social Work was set up.

The programme had three major characteristics– it required bachelor's degree for admission, was of two years duration, and it was called as 'school' much in consonance with the American pattern. Addressing an audience in 1936, Manshardt made a mention of the need for social work as follows: 'As I thought about the matter of training, I became convinced that the standard of social work in India

could not be raised appreciably until a permanent school of Social Work was set up to engage in a continuous study of Indian Social problems and to offer training of social work, on a post-graduate basis … The fundamental courses in social case work, child welfare, social statistics, public welfare administration, medical social work, social psychiatry, social legislation, organization of welfare activities, and the history of philanthropy and public welfare are a necessary part of the equipment of all social workers'.

During this period the *field* was conceptualized around the notion of sectors of welfare, inclusive of welfare delivery systems, with thrust on systems, process, people and deliverables carried out by trained professionals. In 1940, Manshardt[90] himself demarcated the *field* roughly under four major heads: family and child welfare, medical and psychiatric social work, juvenile and adult delinquency and industrial relationships. Social service administration and social research were positioned as important skills and *field* work was seen as learning through direct participation in welfare activities.

Post 1947, the ideas of Gandhiji were dominant. The social work discipline during this time was positioned to play an augmenting role to constructive work emanating from Gandhiji's constructive work programme. In 1949, Jivraj.N.Mehta, the president of the Indian Conference of

90 Clifford Manshardt,(1936) The Sir Dorabji Tata Graduate School of Social Work, Ceylon Men, May .pp.11

Social Work,[91] set up in the year 1947 identified the problem of Refugee, Child Welfare, Health Service, Physical Fitness, Environmental Hygiene, Youth Welfare and Community Organization as focus areas. The final recommendations of the conference identified the practice areas as (i) Rural reconstruction and welfare- agriculture and village industries, sanitation, health and housing, village education, village organization, village culture; State and social service which included a small section on 'Harijan Uplift' and recommendations on welfare of tribal people.

It is within such contextual realities that the demarcation of *fields* came to be formulated. The concept of specializations which began in the TISS in 1948 was framed on such premises. It is also important to note that the social work *fields* of specializations were offshoots of the subjects already contained in the initial syllabus. Medical and Psychiatric Social Work was established in 1948 on invitation by an American social work professional. Family and Child Welfare were started in the year 1949 by an American specialist in Child Development. Both were ultimately headed by Indian faculty trained in the U.S.A. The Department of Group Work and Community Organization was established in 1952, headed by an alumnus trained in the U.S.A. Further in 1953, a full-fledged Department of Criminology, Juvenile Delinquency and Correctional Administration were established, headed by an Indian trained in the U.S.A. With the experience

91 Indian Conference of Social Work (1949) Recommendations of the Third Annual Session. Also see Mehta, B. (1952).Historical Background of Social Work in India. Indian Journal of Social Work , Vol.13 (1). p.1-14.

gained in managing the Social Education Organisers' Training Centre at Hyderabad for rural development, which was on the invitation of the Central Government, in 1955, the Department of Rural Welfare and a separate Department of Community Organisation and Development (for urban areas) was established. In 1959, the two departments engaging with community work were merged into the Department of Urban and Rural Community Development.

Following this the Department of Tribal Welfare was established and short-term programmes were launched to meet the needs of the programmes for tribal welfare started by the Home Ministry of the Government of India. The training of deputed officers from the government commenced in the year 1956. It had a Field Headquarters at Tamia in Madhya Pradesh and field training in forestry, agriculture, animal husbandry, cooperatives and handicrafts as well as social and cultural programmes. Support for this programme was withdrawn in 1966, when the training had to be discontinued for various reasons among which was the difficulty to handle a project at such a great distance plus some degree of lack of belief and support in the process.

The Indian reality during this stage was complex and blurred. Around mid 1960s, people's disillusionment with the overarching development paradigms and its claims to bring about a just social order was witnessed. Saldanha[92]

92 Saldanha.D. (2008). Towards a Conceptualization of Social Action within Social Work: Teaching Social Action as a Dialogue between

notes that this period saw the rise of non-government organisations either with the ideology of human rights, Freire, Marx or Gandhi. Most groups worked as pressure groups, operating from below, driving processes towards a cumulative change brought about through mass participatory base. Their numbers, widespread character and their inter-linkages gave rise to contemporary social movements, aiming at development with people at the centre.

By 1961, Moorthy had identified six *fields*; Family and Child Welfare, Community Organization, Medical and Psychiatric Social Work, Correctional Administration, Labour Welfare and Personnel Development and Tribal Welfare with Public Welfare Administration and Social Research as social work skills.[93] Within Family and Child Welfare the sub fields identified were Marital Counseling, Child Care Institutions and School Social Work. Within Medical and Psychiatric Social Work the sub fields were the physically ill, disabled persons and mentally depressed. Within Correctional Administration the sub fields were Offenders of all ages and types, within jails and reformatories. Within Labour Welfare and Personnel Development the sub fields were factories, mines, plantations and such other industrial work places, including trade unions, and in offices of

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Theoretical Perspectives and Between Theory and Practice. Indian Journal of Social Work , Vol.69 (2), p.111-137.

93 This article was the content of a talk given Moorthy.M.V through the All India Radio, Bombay on 10th February, 1961. Also see Moorthy, M. Vasudeva(1953). Scientific Approach to Field Work IJSW,Vol.14 (2), p.144-159

almost every type of organization as well as in labour communities.

Within Community Organization the sub fields were Community centers and group situations. These, in the understanding of the author were supposed to be opportunities that would provide for play, school, clubs, discussion groups, art, society, local self government, committee working, occupational teams, national development projects towards a vision of building a new India. The organization of such healthy communities in rural and urban settings was the chief function of the field of Community Organization whose main practice is Social Group Work. Within Tribal Welfare the sub fields were 'backward tribal groups' who live in remote hills, forest regions and other isolated areas 'needing to be gradually adjusted to a changing social order in India without which they would disintegrate and develop problems of adjustment'.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) and the Ministry of Education had set up its first Review Committee on Social Work Education[94] which came out with a report. An interesting comment was made in the report that gives us a glimpse of how the field was conceived back then: 'Now that the main aims of social reform have been achieved, the task of social worker has taken a different form...he has to look after the needs of children in orphanages, rehabilitate unmarried mothers and save children from the stigma of illegitimacy... Today the

94 (UGC, 1965: 7)

field of social work coalesces more or less with the field of the social workers in the West.'

The *fields* of social work identified in the report were: labour welfare, rural development and community organisation, tribal welfare, medical and psychiatric social work, correctional work, family and child welfare, work with the elderly, welfare of the handicapped, and so on. It is interesting to note that the UGC report was subsequently criticized by various social workers on the role of social work in the field of development. The Association of Schools of Social Work in India (ASSWI) organized a seminar in 1966 on 'Role of Social Work Profession in Rural Reconstruction' where the traditional welfare approach was severely criticized and the need for a developmental perspective was emphasized.[95] Following this the need for reorienting social work education for greater relevance and to widen the scope for social work practice was advocated vigorously through the late 1970s and in the 1980s. Several institutions undertook major review of their curricula and developed new courses with a more developmental focus thrusting on poverty.[96]

During the period 1975–1977 the country experienced a state of Emergency where official democracy was suspended. This gave rise to a large number of political

95 Desai, Murli and Narayan, Lata (1998). Challenges for Social Work Profession- Towards People-Centred Development Vol.59 (1), p.531-558

96 Desai, 1987

struggles manifest as mass-based movements. Andharia, J.[97] noted that this period also saw 'a critique of social work as being an apolitical enterprise. With the failure of community development programmes to impact the poverty levels or people excluded from health, education, housing, sanitation and infrastructure services, social workers and community organizers were forced to re-examine its excessive emphasis on local development issues'. In the light of this 'some Social workers began to recast their work to include structural factors that shape local realities that led to Community Organization teachers redefining and reshaping CO to align with, contribute to and borrow from literature on diverse forms of organizing – social movements, trade unionism and mass-based people's organization and self-help groups'.

In 1980, the Second Review on Social Work education (UGC) was undertaken. By this time the *fields* in social work had come to be formulated around Industrial Relations and Labour Welfare, Family and Child Welfare, Medical and Psychiatric, Corrections, Rural Development, Community Development (Urban and Rural), Urban Community Development and Tribal Welfare. Desai, A. S.[98] conceived the state of social work education during this period as narrow and proposed the need to broaden curriculum to include agro based professionals, rural engineers and architects, and the need to stretch itself further to include

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97 Andharia.J (2007) Reconceptualising Community Organization in India, A Transdisciplinary Perspective. Vol 15, No 1-2 Journal of Community Practice.

98 Armaity. S. Desai, (1985) Desai, A. S. (1985).Foundations of Social Work Education in India and some Issues Vol.46 (1), p.41-57

indigenous systems such as those in medicine. Her argument for this shift is interesting. She argued that a 'remedial, rehabilitative model is essentially concerned with the breakup of the existing societal systems—the family and the community—resulting in the problems of the care of the disabled, the abandoned woman and child, the aged, or in caring for the deviants of the system which is feeling the strains of change, that is, the criminal and the delinquent, or, in assisting persons to adjust to an alien environment, e.g. industrial labour, or in utilizing the services such as in medical social work. But these reflect the problems of an urban and industrial society which constitutes only 20 per cent of this country. It by-passes the majority of the rural masses who live in poverty and who are necessarily the major target groups for social work—the landless labourer, the small and marginal farmer, the tribal deprived of his centuries old right on the forest, the women and children suffering from the ravages of malnutrition and deprived of many of the most basic needs for food, medical care and education. Professional social work has shown little involvement with these target groups'.

These questions troubled the few critical social work educators and by 1988 to 1990, there was a major curriculum review undertaken at the national level under the auspices of the UGC. Arguments were put forth that it was imperative to include courses such as social action, social development, policy and planning, social conflict and others that would open up social work to a deeper understanding of social realities and a finer engagement

with structures of society and varied forces that are responsible in marginalization.

The 1990s was a period definitive in many ways for the country. It was during this period that India entered proactively and overtly into what we now know as liberalization, privatization and globalization. This period was also identified as that time when we witnessed the increase in number and activities of Non Government Organizations and the rise of the Right Wing sentiments.

India witnessed the demolition of the Babri Masjid, followed by a number of communal riots across the country. This was further made complex by the anti-reservation movements by dominant privileged castes to disallow any further space for deepening representation for varied historically marginalized groups. However this period also saw the Dalit movements becoming more mainstream, occupying centrality in normative discourse, plus a number of State initiatives were taken to tackle what was perceived as 'the tribal problem'. It is argued that this period was the defining moment for the rise of identity politics, both religious and ethnic, that has changed the political landscape to this very moment.

Social Work during this period operated under an ossified environment dithering on any engagement with political issues while seeing itself only as contributors and service deliverers of the welfare state. There were few exceptions in the forms of initiatives taken during this time, but there was nothing really noteworthy that could be recorded. By the early 2000, social work was going through an

interregnum crisis, old ideas and intervention strategies were becoming irrelevant and meaningless and were showing signs of decay while across the country nothing new, in terms of theory and intervention models was being produced. The degree of disconnect between the content of teaching and the reality was at best asymmetrical and at worst disempowering.

It could be argued that the only probable reason why social work education still remained and was to a certain degree receiving applicants for its teaching programmes was probably because it had paid teachers whose permanency of post was untouched by the University Grants Commission and that some State funds were made available for research, training and intervention purposes. This period was characterized by an increased lethargy in social work education and in direct relation to the notion *field* however, two questions beckoned social work education in the early 2000s. One was around the notion of a theoretical stagnation in the conceptualization of the category *field* and two; in relation to the methodological and processual aspects of the indigenization of social work.

Contemporary Social Work and Conception of *field* in India: From 2006 to 2013

Beginning 2006, an article appeared in the IJSW titled "Re-imagining Futures: An Agenda for Change", a report of the Director of Tata Institute of Social Sciences. Two reasons why this report is significant; One, for the first time it recognizes a need to re-imagine *fields* of social work in response to changing realities, and two; for the first time in

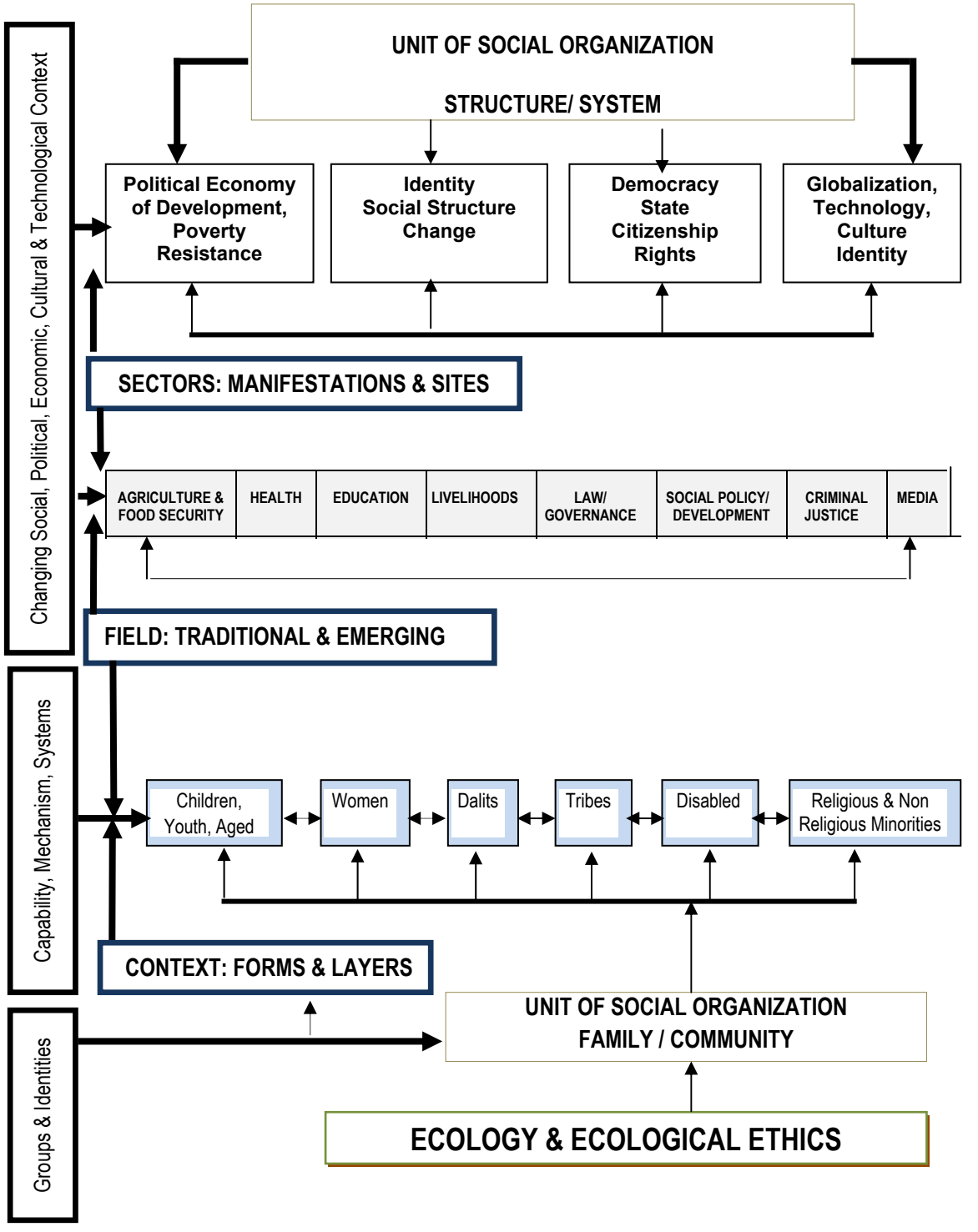
any address within the first school of social work in the country was the category Dalit and Tribal articulated together.

For social work education in India and for many of its educators, reality had not changed much. This can be noted from the curriculum of social work programmes across all the schools offering social work programmes. Even after 71 years, social work programmes remained fundamentally unchanged and held on to the core components formulated in the 1950s with a few inconsequential additions made along the way. No matter how many changes have been brought into social work curriculum across institutes offering social work education in the country, most changes have been non-substantive. There were courses introduced into social work curriculum that were titled as 'Welfare Services for SC/ST and OBCs'. Such course title revealed the deeply paternalistic and extremely condescending attitude of social work educators vis-a-vis marginalized realities.

However the year 2006 is significant. Recognizing the need to make social work relevant, the TISS began restructuring its programme. What emerged from it has somewhat fundamentally altered social work education and its conception of the *field*. While the old conceptions of the *field* still remains around conceptions in the earlier period with some minor changes made through the years, for the first time in social work history we see the emergence of indigenous formulations in the area of Dalits and Tribes as teaching content, programme and a *field*. This is important to note because this idea had been for long suppressed and

forced into 75 years of invisibility by varied groups that dominate social work education in India. Diagram 12 titled 'Period of Reformulation of the Notion Field:2012' is derived from number of discussions over six years beginning 2003, that were carried out in the TISS while its social work programmes were being restructured.

Diagram 12 : Period of Reformulation of the Notion Field: 2012



Currently new distinct *fields* of practiced that has emerged in social work education which includes Dalit and Tribal Social Work, Women Centered Practice and Disability Social Work. While the restructuring trend has not picked up across social work education across the country, efforts towards the same is taking place.

There was the formation of a Government backed Network of Social Work Education[99] which is constituted by one senior representative from every social work institute in the country towards reforming social work courses, revision of curricular and updating the same in consonance with contemporary needs.

Social Work and Conception of *field* in India: From 2013 onwards

Currently the conception of field is being contested between progressive and conservative and the process is reverting back and forth. While conservative forces are demanding more professionalization, progressives are seeking the de-professionalization of social work. While

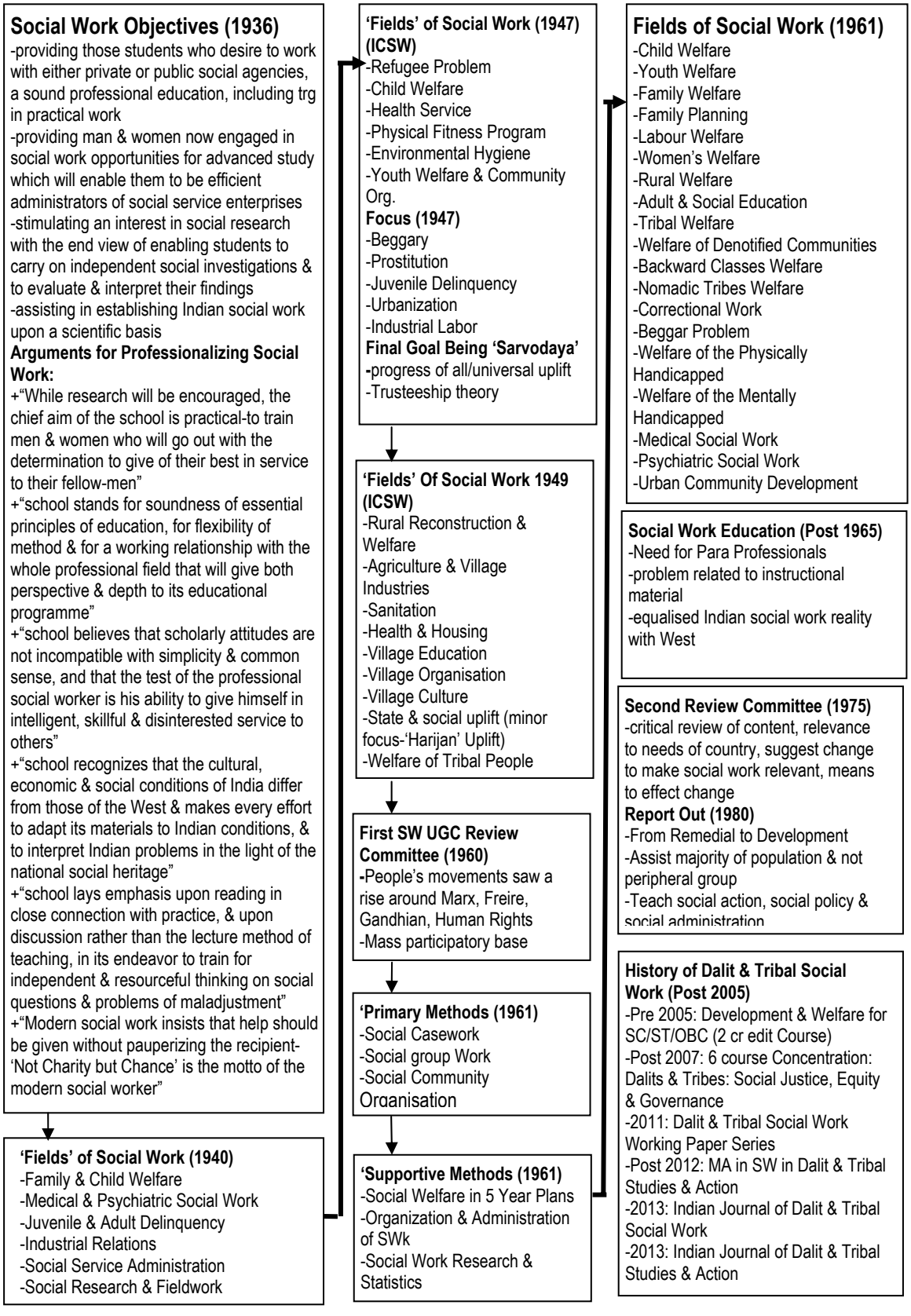
[99] In the Report of the National Network of Social Work Education available at <www.ssw-network.tiss.edu> titled 'National Consultation on National Network of Schools of Social Work for Quality Enhancement of Social Work Education in India, May2-3, 2012' authored by Nadkarni and Desai, snippets of regional discussions were documented. Formulation of a basic core curriculum and standard for social work programmes is being attempted. The one thing that keeps missing is the issues of Dalits and Tribes. Passing reference about structures and structural realities hidden under the jargon of 'culture' and 'social structure', 'multi-culturalism' was made mostly by Eastern region convener, Dr.Nabor Soreng. Most of the other conveners cutting across regions were more concerned about the mushrooming of social work institutes in the country and that students have to pay high fees.

some are stressing on individual and clinical practice demanding that social work must formulate its *core* around casework, groupwork and community organizations, others are demanding more engagement with structure, policy and research, arguing for policy practice, social movements, research and rights/welfare practice. The notion *field* is experiencing reconceptualization but its theoretical direction remains blurred.

In Diagram 13 titled 'Fields of Social Work Practice in India, a glimpse into varied fields of practice is presented. It begins with showing the initial professional social work objectives, the varied 'fields around the early 1940s, followed by conceptions around the late 1940s. The key moment in social work education was the setting up of the first UGC review committee in the 1960s followed by the re-conception of various fields of practice around the early 1980s.

After the second UGC review in the mid 1970s, many programmes were reformulated leading to the restructuring of curriculum of many schools of social work bringing in new domains of education and practice within social work education. In Diagram 13 I have also drawn out a brief history of Dalit and Tribal Social Work and the processes of its evolution to this current moment.

Diagram 13 : Fields of Social Work Practice in India



India is currently being swept by tremendous forces of change and this is being felt within every social work institute. This massive change process is characterized by the emergence of new forces of marginalization and newer forms of discrimination in which the brunt is felt by historically marginalized groups. In response to these changes, critical educators within the profession agree that no matter the situation, any abandoning of the critical edge in social work discipline will lead again, as in the past, into having to rely too heavily on 'end conceptions' borrowed from other non-indigenous knowledge systems which ultimately lead social workers to having to hold loose conceptions of the *context* of work, especially at the structural level, thus making no real dent whatsoever on social reality.

Chapter IV

De-assembling Social Work Methods from Four Points-of-view[100]

Aiming to enrich social work theory in general and social work intervention in particular, this chapter is a humble attempt from a Dalit and Tribal Social Work perspective to revisit and de-assemble social work 'methods'[101] as received,

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100 The first note I had written on methods was published in the working paper series of the Indian Association of Dalit and Tribal Social Workers in 2009. Later I refined the working paper into an article on the same subject which was published in the Jharkhand Journal of Development and Management Studies in its December, 2011 issue. The Title of the article in the said journal was "Critical Reflections on Approaches to Methods in Indian Social Work Education". In this present chapter I have referred to this earlier paper and the conceptions made thereof. Over the years I have delivered many lectures based on this note to my students in the Tata Institute of Social Sciences. But since the concept of 'methods' was changed in the TISS beginning 2019, I have now used this article more like a historical reference rather than as a debate about methods. This article arose as a reflection on the debates in the TISS during the restructuring of its MA programmes in which the 'methods' was a major issue of contestation. To this day the social work 'methods' remains controversial. I perceive these methods more as western strategies developed to respond to western realities. They are semi non-efficacious in India and their relevance if any is mostly by default.

101 The Western Social Work conception of a 'method' (which is challenged by Indigenous Social Work, see Ibid (2008) Mel Gray, John Coates, Michael Yellow Bird) is spelled out by Harriet M.Bartlett (1958) published in (2003) by the National Association of Social Workers in an article titled "Working Definitions of Social Work Practice", special issue on "Research on Social Work Practice as follows: A "Method (i.e., an orderly systematic mode of procedure. As used here, the term encompasses social casework, social group work, and community organization). The social work method is the responsible, conscious, disciplined use of self in relationship with an individual or group. Through this relationship the practitioner

taught and applied in India. Drawing from engagement of over thirteen years against dalit exclusion and tribal peripheralization, four 'points-of-view' are proposed as part of the process of de-assembling the social work 'methods'. It is hoped that formulations and articulations made in this chapter would help destabilize established and set ways of seeing the 'methods' within social work education and allow for newer and more relevant organic conceptions to emerge.

Debates surrounding Professional Social Work in India revolve around two very contentious issues. One is its 'received content' generally referred to as the unidirectional import of social work theories from Europe and North America. The second issue, which is the focus of this paper, is the oft repeated debate pertaining to methods being the 'core' of social work practice.

Currently social work curricula in universities across the country continue to be formulated as per the norms prescribed in the Second Review Committee Report 1980. Consequently, Social Work methods continue to be conceptualized and taught as separate courses in an isolated manner. Each method is formulated and imparted to

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facilitates interaction between the individual and his social environment with a continuing awareness of the reciprocal effects of one upon the other. It facilitates change: (1) within the individual in relation to his social environment; (2) of the social environment in its effect upon the individual; (3) of both the individual and the social environment in their interaction… Social Work method includes systematic observation and assessment of the individual or group in a situation and the formulation of an appropriate plan of action. .."p.269

students as a beginning and an end in itself with clearly laid out demarcated boundaries.

Generally taken and accepted as sacrosanct in professional social work, these 'methods' which occupy centrality in both theory and practice, refer to a specialized skill set that can be learnt and imbibed through rigorous social work training, complete with frameworks constituting of 'philosophical assumptions, principles, theoretical formulations and tools and techniques of practice'.[102]

A cross sectional analysis of methods formulation across social work schools in India shows that Case Work, Group Work and Community Organization are formulated as self-contained skill sets complete with perspective, strategy and techniques. Educator's efforts are generally invested to define boundaries and skills comprehensively permitting clarity in theoretical formulation and articulation. Most of the method courses are also taught as separate courses within the country's social work schools.

The (traditional) social work practice methods – using case work, group work and community organization remains core in practice and still occupy place of prominence in Indian social work education. This is reflected heavily in teaching content of various schools and universities offering Social Work programmes which includes Tata Institute of Social Sciences till recently[103], Lucknow

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102 Mathew,G. (1992). An Introduction to Social Casework. Mumbai: Tata Institute of Social Sciences.

103 TISS renamed two of its methods courses from Social Case Work to Working with Individuals and Social Group Work to Working with

University and Loyola College. In some instances, like in Bharati Vidyapeeth, Mizoram University, Nirmala Niketan and Delhi School of Social Work;[104] case work, group work and community organization are referred to as 'working with individuals', 'working with groups' and 'working with communities'. Debates whether there has been a total reformulation of the practice paradigms in these cases or are they just a change of name from 'method' to paradigms of 'working with' is still ongoing. The Indira Gandhi National Open University (2011) interestingly has a combination of both the above, such as (i) Case Work and Counseling: Working with Individuals, (ii) Social Group Work: Working with Groups and (iii) Community Organization Management for Community Development.[105] Across the world and especially in Europe there have been tremendous debates about the methods. Till the 1970s, the key methods identified were casework, family work, groupwork and community work.[106] By 1990s

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Groups. However its propestus from 2019-2021 still has earlier Method's courses.

104 Bharati Vidhyapeth University, (2009). Department of Social Work Prospectus (as on 10th December, 2009). Also see Loyola College. (2009). Department of Social Work, www.loyolacollege.edu/socialwork.html (dated 10th December, 2009); Lucknow University, (2009). Ordinances & Syllabus, Faculty of Arts, Department of Social Work. (as on 10th December, 2009); Mizoram University. (2009). Department of Social Work. http://www.mzu.edu.in/schools/social%20work.html (dated 10th December, 2009) and the Tata Institute of Social Sciences. (2009). Masters Degree Programme Prospectus 2009-2011, TISS Publication

105 Indira Gandhi National Open University (2011)

106 See the chapter by Dave Ward on Group Work in the book edited by Robert Adams, Lena Dominelli and Malcolm Payne (1998) Social Work: Themes, Issues and Critical Debates published by Macmillan Press Ltd. Ward further notes "The four methods were a product of a

there was a decline in the centrality of the four methods based on many factors such as the 'drive towards specialization, the emergence of the law as a central concern, new approaches to the education and training of social workers, the impact of 'new managerialism'[107] and, finally the searching and scathing critiques of theory and practice from radical, feminist and anti-racist perspectives' leading to what Ward calls 'the demethoding of social work'[108].

Revisiting and Re-imaging Social Work Methods from Four Points-of-view

It is my restrained judgment arrived at through thirteen years of engagement with social work methods i.e., primary: casework, group work, community organization and supplementary: social research, social work administration and social action, that the professional social work

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time that has now passed. They made sense as a part of the knowledge base of an aspiring profession which confidently saw itself progressing to enlightened status and security. Battered from all sides, those conditions no longer apply. Social Workers' confidence in themselves has been profoundly shaken. It is not surprising that they have come to feel safer operating within instrumental but more clear and defensible frameworks, reflected in such buzz words as 'competencies', 'risk assessment' and 'case management'.(pp.,151-152)

107 Ibid., Ward explains 'New Managerialism' as a trend arising in Britain where the focus is on concrete and measureable outcomes, in a drive towards greater economy, efficiency and effectiveness. p.151

108 Ibid., Dave Ward notes "The final factor I wish to note as influencing the 'demethoding' of social work has been the so-called 'progressive' critique of traditional social work. This has interrogated not only the reactionary policies and practices flowing from the New Right, but also how good intentions can be damaging. It began with the Radical Social Work movement in the late 1970s and early 80s, moving on into the trenchant critiques from feminist, disability, gay and lesbians, and anti-racist perspectives from the mid-80s." p.151.

community is locked in four different 'points-of-view' about the methods. Each of these positions are somewhat determined by location, field of practice and one's ideological position. While these 'points-of-view' are framed differently, as characterized by the possibility of framework and conceptual relocation, nonetheless each are classically well formulated and positioned within itself and in context.

Points-of-view - One:

…Each of the Social work Methods can be practiced separately, in isolation and with least reference and connect to other methods…

If one was to view society as constituted by individuals, then it comes naturally to such a perspective that most problems and solutions of all ills that are experienced in society are to be found contained in individuals. This container of problems- the 'individual' can be comprehended through the usage of various theoretical and methodological framework and processes. Believing that it is possible to understand the individual and his/her concomitant problems, one could then develop various strategies to remedy problems experienced by and within the individual.

In such a perspective, a method of intervention could be perceived as a combination of various techniques complete with a premise perspective, theoretical frame, intervention strategies and a foreseeable controlled desirable outcome. Social workers positioned within this conception sees methods, especially those that are focused on the individual such as casework as being 'a method of helping people

individually through a one-to-one relationship complete with philosophical assumptions, principles, theoretical formulations and tools and techniques of practice'.[109]

Focusing specifically on the individual, methods could be clearly formulated, defined, contextualized and applied, moving from the individual (who is the core constitutive element), to groups, to communities and to structures and systems as shown in Diagram 14. Within this premise, it is assumed that method/s can be learnt and imbibed through rigorous social work training.

When the individual becomes the primary unit of analysis and intervention, formulation of any other interventions with groups and communities are considered important but holds secondary status to direct intervention with the individual. Such a formulation leads to the belief that it is important and possible to differentiate and demarcate clearly the theoretical boundaries between one method of intervention and the other.

Further, since the individual is the core object of analysis and intervention, the method that caters to the individual is the most important method, pushing other methods to playing, at most, a facilitative role. With the method/s now attaining, in itself a comprehensive clear bounded theoretical framework, they are perceived in subtle ways to be reliable absolutes, without any loose theoretical ends.

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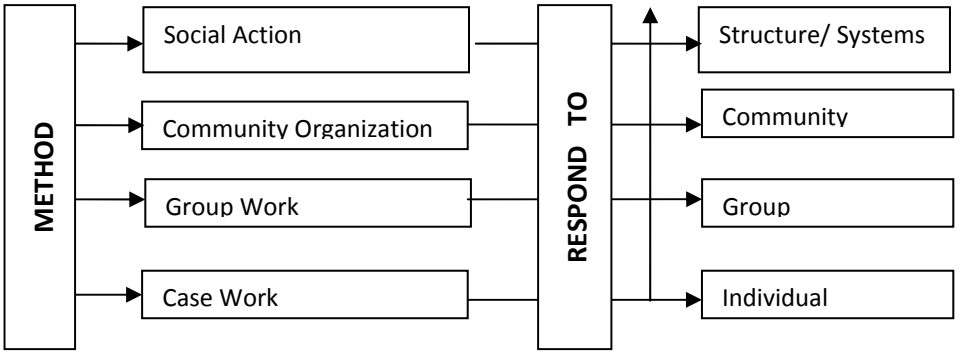
109 Mathew,G. (1992). An Introduction to Social Casework. Mumbai: Tata Institute of Social Sciences.

Processually, this way of conceiving and perceiving the methods, strongly upholds the belief that one could identify beginnings and ends of every single method and as part of the process there is great need to define the method especially in the areas of conceptual boundary, fields of practice and technical skills.

Diagram 14 : Points-of-view: One[110]



In the course of social work training, any inability to comprehend or have theoretical control over such formulations is perceived as having 'not arrived' at understanding the method yet. One need to learn definitions with ability to delineate boundaries of definitions, content and jargon of process, principles, identified intervention strategies and even acquiring capability to comprehend and control possible outcomes. With greater understanding of conceptions comes greater ability to intervene, and with greater ability to intervene comes greater confidence in practice. Thus one is measured

110 Also 'Hierarchy Approach' to Methods, bodhi s.r, 2011

as either a 'good' social worker or a 'bad' social worker only if one has mastery over this process.

To summarize this 'point-of-view', there are clear lines of demarcation between one method and the other both conceptually and methodologically as shown in Diagram 14. Further each of the method accepting the individual as fundamental, are somewhat placed in different permutations and combinations depending on the unit of intervention and sectoral thrust or focus. Stemming from the above it is an accepted belief that one single method can do without the others at any given point of time or at best one method is more important than the other.

Points-of-view: Two

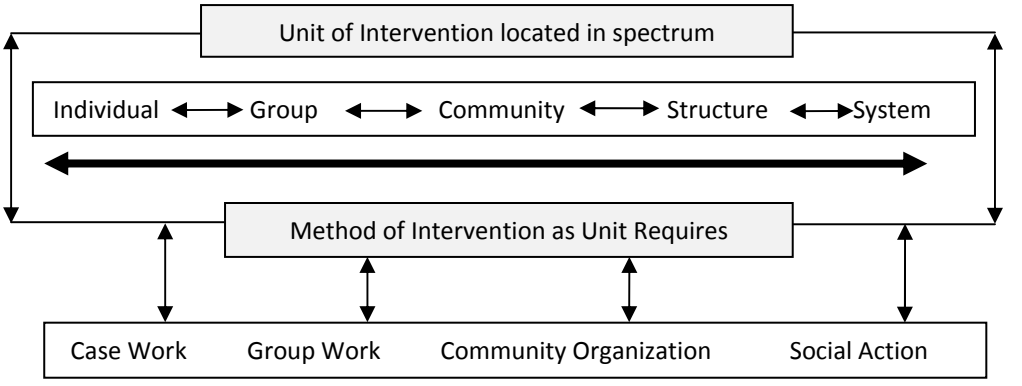
…*Social Work Methods are located in a spectrum and needs to be drawn as a skill set in response to a problem identified in the social context*…

The second 'point-of-view' to 'methods' takes a slight theoretical shift from the first and is generally observed among social workers opining the fluid nature of the social context. While the individual is still important, the individual is subjected to some degree of de-emphasis and the notion of groups and collectives becomes as equally important as the individual. This perspective is held generally by those working with groups that need more psychosocial intervention rather than just psychological intervention as it is with the first approach that focuses on psychological or psychosomatic problems.

In the context of the formulation of methods, this approach tends to position itself within a perspective that identifies no beginnings and no ends for any single method. Within the framework, conceiving that the lines of demarcation between one method and the other are somewhat blurred and not easily demarcated in lived reality, boundaries can thus never be easily drawn, bounded or definable. Further it proposes that there is possibly no beginning and no end in conception of every single social work method.

From this analysis stems the argument that it is difficult to draw theoretical demarcations between methods and that the act of theoretical engagement is merely to provide some initial knowledge and framework for efficacious intervention. One could further argue that from this location social reality is dynamic and not static, boundaries does not take precedence over content and overall the focus is on the method being a way (tested) of intervention and in an abstract sense, a point-of-view; a perspective. Diagram 15 below represents this formulation.

Diagram 15 : Points-of-view: Two[111]



Compared to the first 'point-of-view', one observes four positionality shifts away from the first. They are as follows (i) the individual is no more the core unit of intervention, (ii) problems take place and manifest in a complex and fluid social context (iii) methods must respond to a fluctuating reality depending on how it presents itself rather than approach a situation with fixed method and (iv) group processes have tremendous capability of healing and empowering.

Nonetheless even though this approach problematises the notion of individual as a 'container' of problems and challenges the idea that one method begins where another method ends, yet there is still a fundamental acceptance of the existence and totalizing capacity of specific individual methods. Notwithstanding the overall epistemic shift manifest in such conceptualizations, methods do exist and they constitute the core to any understanding and

111 Also 'Spectrum Approach' to Methods in bodhi s.r, 2011

intervention process in social work. The methods are a conglomeration of well formulated strategies with a sound theoretical base, tested over time, space and situations that are bound to bring the desired results if applied correctly. These methods can be learnt, applied and through a number of experiments/experiences in practice, one could deepen both understanding and refinement of the intervention process.

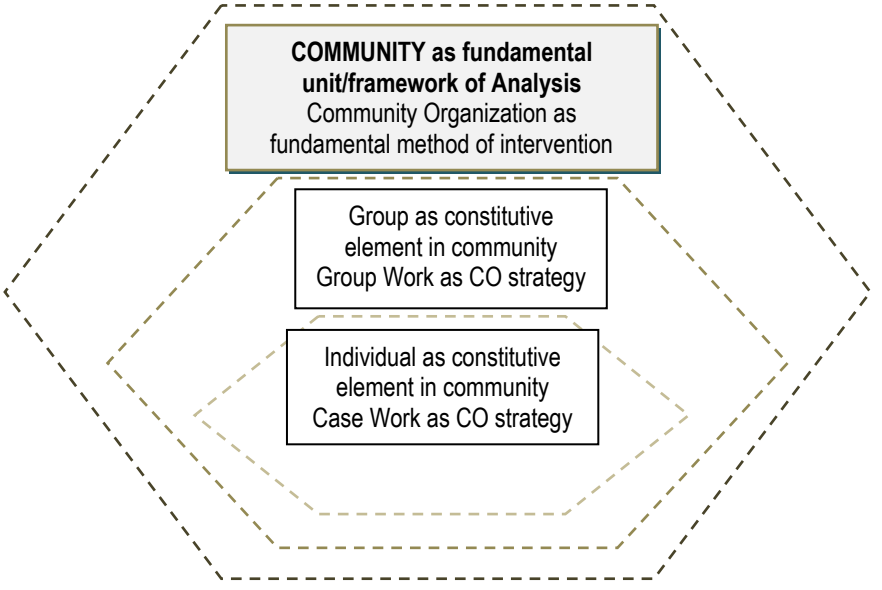
Briefly, within this 'point-of-view' it is important however to note that there is stress on understanding social reality deep enough to be able to discern what method to use, when and where.

Points-of-view: Three

…*The concept of community is fundamental to social work engagement and all methods are encapsulated within its framework*…

In the third 'point-of-view', methods moves away from the above two in fundamental ways and is generally observed among social workers practicing community work. This approach takes into consideration structural realities inclusive of social groupings and their identities in a larger frame of social change within the concept of community. Constitutive structural elements such as historical, socio-cultural, current political and economic realities are considered imperative for theorizing, action and change. This conceptualization subsumes all other intervention strategies under the community rubric. The same is shown in Diagram 16.

Diagram 16 : Points-of-view: Three[112]



Within this 'point-of-view', the concept of 'community' constitutes the fundamental premise. Concomitant structures and boundaries within the community form the basis of all social work theory and practice. The individual, within this perspective is subjected to some degree of de-emphasis and is generally seen as part of a socially constructed embodiment trapped in structure. At best the individual is mostly a symptom carrier and most ills and problems are to a great extent a manifest of the structures of a context. Individual consciousnesses are constructed within structures of society and a will to freedom from individuals demands a persistent engagement in process within community of action, reflection and transformation of social reality.

Further in this 'point-of-view', there is an element of reformation embedded within the approach. An act of

112 Also 'Organic Approach' to Methods in bodhi s.r, 2011

surrender to structure is seen as an indirect submission and acceptance of the given reality by people, or, more so as a passive recipient of the process rather than an agency; an active constructor of social reality. What follows from this perspective is a socio-political distaste of individual centric work that is blind to the role of structures in shaping people's lives. Individual centric methods such as Casework and Group Work are perceived as delimiting and disempowering and are generally identified as acts that subject people to de-politicization that leads to affirming the status quo. Further, Case Work and Group work are also seen as remedial and at most 'problem fixing', that is helping the individual to adjust to his/her problems rather than transforming structure which is conceived as the root cause of most social ills.

As an outcome, the individual who was perceived as a passive recipient and an apolitical entity responsible for one's ills and emancipation in the earlier two approaches is seen within this framework as an active political agent with agency to transform reality towards more responsive and egalitarian social structures. Seeing Community Organization as the fundamental social work method and Casework, Group Work, Social Work Administration and Social Work Research as important strategies of community work, this approach contest any formulation of methods outside the frame of community on grounds that such intervention could instead lead to further disempowerment of peoples.

Points-of-view: Four

…It is context that gives rise to formulation of intervention strategies…It is context that determines what strategies be applied…

The fourth 'point-of-view' moves further away from all the above three conceptions. In this approach, it is not the individual, the group nor the community that occupies centrality, but it is the 'context' that is most fundamental. The context here refers to a dynamic, fluid, confluence of time, space and person experienced in the here and now, experienced in the realm of common sense.

This point-of-view posits that it is only the contextual reality that should define the intervention, as in, the most efficacious intervention arises at the most fundamental level from its own organic context. One could see that within this perspective any identification of compact methodologies in social work is seen as problematic. This is so because 'methods' are perceived as water tight compartments and rigid theorization of processes that are false conceptualizations of a dynamic social reality.

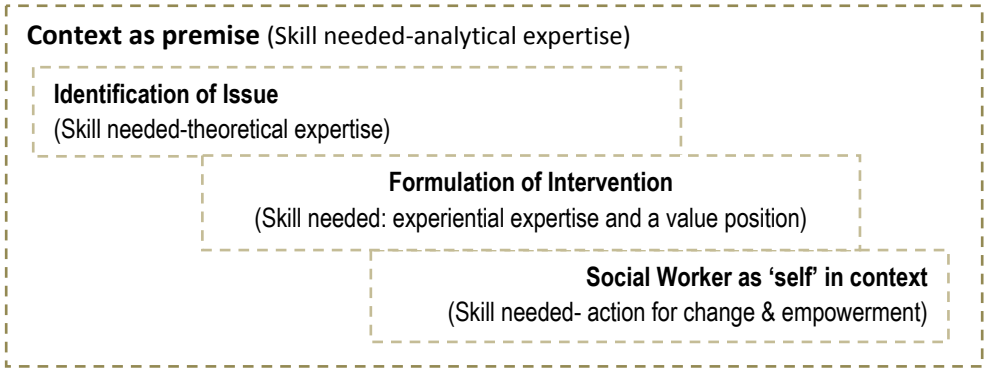
I have heard various social workers, arguing from within this perspective, that the moment one approaches an issue from a method standpoint, the context tends to get overshadowed by the method, and in the process, the context is unconsciously nudge to the background and fades into oblivion only to reassert back when intervention is not producing the desired outcome.

This 'point-of-view' purports to argue that one could view the context from a number of perspectives while engaging

in analyzes, identification of issues and formulating of intervention strategies within the said context. Further in order to proceed in such an engagement the social worker has to first capacitate oneself with a thorough analysis and understanding of the contextual reality. In this formulation the context takes precedence over 'a single procedure or way of doing something in a regular, systematic and orderly planned manner'.

It is not difficult then to see that social work practice from this point-of-view fundamentally rejects the very idea of the 'method' in engagement, viewing the same as delimiting, restricting and parochial. This is because this 'point-of-view' is wary of tank-tight conceptions around individual, groups or community(s), as such classifications exist only at a real/conceptual level while the 'actual' present itself as layered realities, engulfed in intersections and multiplicities in a context. The formulation of this 'point-of-view' is as shown in Diagram 17.

Diagram 17 : Points-of-view: Four[113]



113 Also 'Context approach' to Methods in bodhi s.r, 2011

Social Work 'Methods' seen from this 'point-of-view' are a hindrance to good practice as there is high tendencies on the part of the social worker to get lost in a conceptual world of methods, trying to formulate and make sense about a preconceived and pre-formulated 'action' even before comprehending theoretically an ever changing, radically unpredictable and untidy context. So it follows from this position that as regards social work education, what should be actually taught to social work students, are sound theoretical frames (emerging from a context) coupled with the latest available information, and following this, concomitant practice skills (both macro & micro) in relation to the identified context. The content of 'doing' then is formulated around fields and sites of practice rather than methods. The only boundaries that exist are boundaries of the dynamic open system in a state of process.

Conclusion

As a social work educator, I have had number of opportunities to be part of sorority gatherings over a period of seventeen years where there have been stimulating academic debates about social work methods. Minute observations: both content and process have given me insights on method-formulation, their constitutive elements, issues concerning methodology, intricate pedagogical processes and above all perspective and the play of ideologies.

In most of these gatherings, it is to be noted that rarely have social work academics problematised and taken a

detailed microscopic peep at the constitutive elements of what the profession identifies as a 'method' vis-a-vis their epistemic premises, ideological source, practice paradigms, strategies, principles that govern their formulation and above all their relationship with Indian reality.

Thus in attempting to revisit methods which arose from an understanding that there are too many formulations in social work education that are generally accepted as given and sacrosanct, one also hopes that this chapter contributes to the numerous efforts of many other critical social work educators across the country in liberating Indian social work from rigid conceptions, self serving interventions and disempowering engagements.

Chapter V

On the Politics of Social Work Curriculum and Pedagogy[114]

In brief, this chapter is a conversation with self about social work education and practice. Equanimous in nature, it attempts to unravel the subject/object experience and analysis of some key fundamental issues that one has been involved in over the years as a social work educator. I have divided the chapter into three parts; (i) laying the context and frame of contemporary contestations in social work education; (ii) social work education- a case study of the TISS restructuring processes and (iii) critical reflections on curriculum, pedagogy and programme frameworks in social work. I attempt to discuss threadbare some of the emerging challenges that confront social work education in the current context and brings to light issues that the discipline should probably concern itself with in the future.

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114 I wrote this note to clarify my own thoughts about the dynamics of curriculum formulation in social work in 2011 in relation to a number of questions raised by students about curriculum. Later I lectured on this subject to my new students to give them a glimpse of the structures of social work programmes. There have been three colloquiums of the Center for Social Justice and Governance in TISS, Mumbai and several lectures within TISS and outside that I have delivered related to same subject. I was a consultant for the Royal University of Bhutan in its curriculum formulation for the social work programme and have used this note as a basis to share with colleagues in the RUB to support the formulation of their programme.

A. On Context and Frame

I have often heard social work educators pointing out, and have in many occasion articulated the same myself, that a social work programme by the very nature of its vision, mission and practice must have the intrinsic ability to adapt to changing contextual reality in consonance (or at least as close as possible) to the dynamic changes taking place in the external environment. However, while keeping pace with such dynamic changes and intervening accordingly, social work's vision to achieve welfare and development with social justice remains intrinsically non-negotiable. Fundamental principles such as protection and promotion of human dignity and self worth of every person; equity and equality, non-hierarchical and non-discrimination of human groups; conscious elimination of systemic discrimination and marginalization of vulnerable groups such as dalits, women and tribes; ensuring universal and equitable access to essential resources, peace and collaborative social relationships; etc., are core to social work struggles and politics. Holding firm to this vision and mission, social workers position themselves in ways that would be meaningful and empowering to peoples, structures and systems they engage with and work through.

Having stated the basis of social work as above, it must be stated, however, that on matters concerning the ability to read reality and position intervention efficaciously, it must be accepted (at least among social work educators), that social work has faltered at every step in its nearly eighty one long years of existence in India. Unfortunate, when viewed retrospectively, social work programmes have had the

tenacious ability of being and remaining anachronistic throughout, and thereby irrelevant and obsolete to many structural contexts that seek its attention. Theoretical formulations conceived as early as those postulated in 1936, in terms of focus and practice areas which got differentiated further in the late 1950s into specializations, such as Family and Child Welfare, Medical and Psychiatric Social work, Criminology and Correctional Administration, Urban and Rural Community Development and a few others, have remained static and unchanging till date.

Perceived from such a stand point, one could argue that either the socio-political or economic environment has remained static for the past eighty one years and therefore social work specializations as conceptualized in the early 1950s are still very much relevant today, or, Social Work Educators themselves are stuck in the thinking process and literature of the fifties and are resistant to any change of their perspectives and practice domain, while the environment has moved on. In other words, social work educators seem immune and sightless to the changes taking place around them, whether related to new forms or forces of marginalization or new structural discrepancies that have crept into the system leading to a renewed discrimination and the peripheralization of peoples; bounded, conceived and oppressed around varied new social realities and identities.

However, no matter how critical we may be of such processes, we must admit that historical attempts to stay abreast and efficacious have been made among educators. So we observe that in response to very complex realities of

the earlier decades beginning 1940s, the history of social work education tells us that educators have responded by ingenious formulation manifesting two streams of Social Work education made available to Social Work students across India; one is the generic stream, as in the Delhi School of Social Work with few optional courses in key sectors and, two, the specialization stream; as in Loyola College Chennai and Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai. While two[115] UGC review committees, one in 1965 and 1985 have made relevant suggestions about vision, mission and subject content of social work training, yet one is left wanting about the Review committee's analysis and understanding of macro/structural Indian reality.

In this regard, the specializations which had a sectoral thrust still remained as they were conceived in the initial days of social work education implemented across Social Work institutes in the country, with the exception of TISS, that went on a super specialization spree as it restructured its programme in 2005-06.

At the TISS, it is important to note that many new conceptions in the form of FOPs are formulated much more around 'perspectives' rather than sectors. The historically dominant 'sector-wise' specializations, was an evolutionary outcome of a particular 'way of conceiving'. This approach relied much more on conceptualising social

115 While the third review committee set up by the UGC for social work education have taken place. I am yet to get access to its report. Apropos to this inaccessibility i have consciously not quoted the same.

work education on the twin notions of 'sectoral differentiation' and 'intervention areas', rather than on any informed analysis of social structure, pro-poor ideological leaning or even on systems of oppression and exclusion.

These shifts being made from ‘sector’ to structure, power and discourse could be because of many reasons. But one that is most obvious is that there is an increased sense of theoretical saturation and methodological poverty about the 'sectoral conception'.

I have often reflected deeply about these processes. Over the years what has become obvious to me as an educator is that these are articulations of an organic need; as in a movement among social work theorists and practitioners towards 'ways of seeing’ as in ‘perspectives' rather than ‘domains of doing’ as in 'sectors'. I firmly believe that this felt need to shift social work episteme towards the direction of 'perspective' at this juncture in its history is an organic social and theoretical necessity. This is occurring, I opine, as social work educators attempt to rejuvenate, deepen and make efficacious social work education to contemporary socio-political realities and current politico-economic contexts of the Indian conditions. This does not mean however, that one devalues historically conceived and identified social work sectors. The processual shift only indicates that social work education would have to or even begin to encapsulate new areas and fields of practice as we proceed in time and space.

B. On Restructuring of Social work Education: A Case of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences

To get a better understanding of social work curriculum debates and propositions let me attempt to take a look at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), the institute where professional social work education was first offered in India. The TISS went through a radical restructuring (both academic and administration) in the year 2005. The outcomes and processes that led to a new formalised restructured system in 2006, were initiated as early as the mid 1990s, picking momentum around 2002 and earnestly pushed forward by 2005. While the restructuring impacted 'research units' much more, than social work teaching departments itself, (whose details are beyond the scope of this paper), few fundamental changes did also take place in the social work academic structure and the social work curriculum. The erstwhile five departments of social work- Urban and Rural Community Development (URCD), Criminology and Correctional Administration (CCA), Family and Child welfare (FCW), Medical and Psychiatric Social Work (MPSW) and Social Welfare Administration (SWA) became 'Centres'.[116] They are the Centre for Community Organisation and Development Practice, Centre for Health and Mental Health, Centre for Disability Studies and Action, Centre for Equity for Women, Children and Families, Centre for Criminology and Justice and the Centre for Social Justice and Governance.[117] Under one

116 TISS (2005). Prospectus of Masters Degree programme 2006-2008, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai

117 TISS (2012). Prospectus of Masters Degree programme 2012-2014, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai

overarching social work masters programme, each of these Centres offered 'major concentrations' (a set of six courses-twelve credits) in the third semester, and a set of minor concentrations (a set of four courses-eight credits) in the fourth semester. The major concentrations were called 'Fields of Practice', and the minor concentrations were divided into two types- 'Thematic/Knowledge based concentrations' and 'Skill based concentrations'. Diagram 18 shows the title of each of these concentrations-both major and minor concentrations. The conceptualization of these processes comes from my own understanding and interpretation and is not the official position of the TISS. Having participated actively in the restructuring I have my own views on each of these processes and have stated so.

Within the concentration framework that was initially offered, students were given the choice to choose after a more generic first and second semester, from any of the third semester major 'Fields of Practice' (FOP) concentrations, followed by any two of the minor concentrations in the fourth semester. Those who opted for research dissertation needed to opt only for one of the concentrations in the fourth semester. The experience of this initial framework (also called the 'cafeteria approach') which was laid down based on the recognition of student's capacities for choice and decision making. This framework however produced much skewed results.

Diagram 18 : History of Social Work Education in TISS

HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL WORK AT TISS

2007: Restructured SW Programmes Offered
2005: Restructuring of TISS
2003: FCW, MPSW, URCD Curriculum Review
1988 to 1990: UGC national level curriculum review. Social action, social development, policy & planning and social conflict considered important for inclusion.
1983: Unit for Labour Studies & Unit for Family Studies
1982: Unit for Women's Studies
1981: Unit for Rural Studies
1978: Unit for Social Policy and Social Welfare Administration
1977: Unit for Urban Studies
1970: Unit for Research in the Sociology of Education
1969: Unit for Child and Youth Research
1968: Department of Social Welfare Administration
1967: Separation of M. A in Social Work & PMIR
1959: **Department of Urban & Rural Community Development**
1955: Separate Department of Rural Welfare and Department of Community Organization and Development (for urban areas)
1954: Department of Psychology (terminated 1962) and Department of Tribal Welfare (funding withdrawn in 1966)
1953: Department of Criminology, Juvenile Delinquency & Correctional Administration
1952: Department of Group work and Community Organization
1949: (i) Rural Reconstruction and Welfare - Agriculture and village industries, sanitation, health and housing, village education, village organization, village culture; State and social service which included a small section on 'Harijan Uplift' and recommendations on Welfare of Tribal People (ICSW)
1949: Family and Child Welfare
1948: Medical and Psychiatric Social Work & Community work incorporated in curriculum
1947: Indian Conference of Social Work was set up - identified Refugee problem, Child Welfare, Health Service, Physical Fitness programme, Environmental hygiene, Youth welfare and community organization as the fields of social work practice. The need for a ministry of social welfare, council of social agencies, importance of voluntary agencies, co-ordination of social work, social work training, with *sarvodaya* as a final goal. Focus was on beggary, prostitution, juvenile delinquency and urban, industrial labour.
1940: Courses - Family and Child Welfare; Medical and Psychiatric Social Work; Juvenile and Adult delinquency; Industrial Relationships; Social Service Administration; Social Research and Field work

WHY TISS RESTRUCTURED?

-Social work at TISS was existing for itself, had become non responsive to the changing environment
-Isolated from the external & disengaged within/among itself
-Disconnected to emerging realities, groups & sites of marginalization
-Rigidity of organizational structure, rules and regulations becoming an academic hindrance
-Decrease in innovations & innovative response to dynamic context
-Non usage of Faculty expertise (especially located in research units)
-"Lethargy has set in…" "We are degenerating..." "We have become a big non responsive organization…" "WHY & WHAT ARE WE HERE FOR?"

WHAT HAPPENED DURING TISS RESTRUCTURING

-Discussions & debates among faculty cutting across departments & research units
-External expertise brought in for organization feedback
-Internal and External environment match (The Indian reality – The TISS reality)
-Reformulation of Internal organization structure (Centers instead of Dept. under Broad Thematic Schools)
-New themes sprang up post analysis of external reality
-Faculty moved to new reformulated themes around the notion of TEAMS in Centers

Product of First Phase of Restructuring (2006-2008)

COMMON FIRST YEAR
Foundation Courses + Bridge Courses:
Social Work Practice: Principles & Concepts I (8 credits)
Social work Practice: Principles & Concepts II (4 credits)
History & Ideology of Social Work (2 credits)
Participatory Communication (2 credits)
Quantitative & Qualitative Research (2 credits each)
MAJOR CONCENTRATIONS (12 credits each)
-Community Organization & Devp. Practice
-Family Social Work
-Person with Disabilities & Equalization of Opportunities
-Health & Development
-Criminology & Justice
-Dalits & Tribes: Social Justice, Equity & Governance
MINOR CONCENTRATE (8 credits)
(KNOWLEDGE or THEMATIC CONCENTRATES)
-Rural Development
-Environment & Sustainable Livelihoods
-Urban Development, Unorganized Sector & Livelihood
-Social Work in the field of Mental Health
-Social Policy & Social Welfare Administration
-Child & Youth Development
-Community Health
-Disasters, Impoverishment & Social Vulnerability
-Juvenile Justice & Youth in Conflict
(SKILL BASED CONCENTRATE)
-Management of Non-Profit Organizations
-Developmental Therapeutic Counseling
-Social & Development Planning & Advocacy
-Rehabilitative & Correctional Social Work
-Child & Youth Practice
FIELDWORK
Common First Year & Second Year-Third sem concentration based-I Sem: Concurrent, II Sem: Blocks, III & IV Sem: concurrent or block as decided by concentration

WHAT HAPPENED IN THE MID PHASE TISS 2007-2009

2007-09: Women Centered Social Work and Child and Youth Development. Minor concentration Social Policy course was renamed Social Policy and Planning, Social and Development Planning and Advocacy was dropped.
2008-10: M.A Disability Studies & Action
2009-2011: Merging of the minor, knowledge based/thematic concentrations and the skill based concentrations to offer 12 minor concentrations**:**
Rural Development, Environment and Sustainable Livelihoods, Urban Development: Unorganized Sector and Livelihoods, Social Work in the Field of Mental Health, Social Policy and Planning, Community Health, Disasters, Impoverishment and Social Vulnerability, Juvenile Justice and Youth in Conflict, Developmental/ Therapeutic Counseling, Socio-Legal Rehabilitation Practice, Advanced Practice with Children and Families, Youth and Change, Conflict, Peace and Human Security.
Optional courses: Governance of NPO, Organizational Behavior in NPO, Strategic Management for NPO, Financial Management in NPO, Project Management, Training for Social Work Personnel, Non-formal Education, International Social Work, Spiritual Social Work

WHAT DOES TISS HAVE NOW

In 2012-2014 another restructuring took place and the School of Social Work, TISS (Mumbai) now offers 9+1 Thematic Masters prog.
MA. Social Work in Criminology & Justice
MA. Social Work with Children & Families
MA. Social Work with Community Organization & Devp. Practice
MA. Social Work in Disability Studies & Action
MA. Social Work in Dalit & Tribal Studies & Action
MA. Social Work in Livelihoods & Social Entrepreneurship (*change to Livelihood & Social Innovation in 2014)*
MA. Social Work in Mental Health
MA. Social Work in Public Health
MA. Social Work in Women Centered Practice
MA in SW in Rural Development (Tuljapur Campus)
MA in SW Generic (Guwahati Campus)

16 Credits of Common Courses in First Year:
Social Case Work
Social Group Work
Community Organization
Social Welfare Administration
Quantitative Research
Qualitative Research
History & Perspective of Social Work
Critical Perspective on Social Work: Intro to Social Theories
Compulsory Research
Fieldwork-I Year at School level, II Year at Centre Level

AREAS REMAINING UNRESOLVED

-Is there anything like a 'Core' of Social Work?
-Does context determine practice or does our method determine practice?
-Is all of social work the same: Are there different types of social work or one social work?
-What is indigenous social work. Do we have an Indian specific social work?
-Are TISS M.As generic programmes, specializations or separate Masters
-What are objectives of each key curriculum activity (Group Labs, Fieldwork first year, second year, Rural Practicum, Field Visits, -Common 'core' courses, Perspective that inform us, Curriculum principles, teaching pedagogy)
-Are we Welfare Practitioners, NGO workers, Social Activist, Charity Workers?
-Are we 'Agents of Control' or 'Agents of Change'?

In the first year, out of the six 'Fields of Practice' concentrations, three received twenty students and above, with one FOP receiving nearly fifty plus students, while three FOPs had less than ten students. This was 2007. The second year-2008, saw four FOPs receiving students above ten and two FOPs with less than ten. By 2007-2009 academic years, two new FOPs were added- Women Centred Practice and Child and Youth Development. The FOP concentrate- Disability Studies and Action became a full-fledged Masters programme separate from the main concentration-based social work programme in the academic year 2008-2010.

Throughout this period, that is from 2007-2009 to 2012-2014 the programme structure was constantly being modified and changed around the framework of the concentrations. However by 2012-2014 a new programme structure under the rubric of 'Social Work Thematic Masters Programme' was introduced. A total of nine, plus one in 2014, thematic Masters in Social Work programme were offered. Diagram 18 shows each of these Thematic-Masters of Art in Social Work programmes.

It has been nearly eleven years since the restructuring of the social work programmes in TISS took place. However, current debates regarding fundamental issues about curriculum remains. Most of these questions as represented in Diagram One concern social work vision, mission and its curriculum. In the next section, I reflect on some of the questions that emerged after the TISS restructuring process especially those that concern the curriculum principles. While I will touch upon social work vision and mission, my

thrust would be on unravelling some of the positions, perspectives and issues concerning social work curriculum and pedagogy.

C. On Curriculum Principles, Structure/Components and Pedagogy

Before dwelling into curriculum issues, it is important first to capture in a few words about the key stakeholder in the education process. These are the social work students. I have often noticed that there is a peculiarity to the background of students pursuing social work programmes. While the initial period of social work education saw many urban based students filling the seats of social work institutes, the trend is starting to change. Since most social work institutes were located in urban locales, they attracted many more urban-based students. However in due course of time many more institutes have sprung up especially in semi urban and rural areas. Plus with the entry of the Indira Gandhi National Open University offering Bachelors and Masters Programmes in Social Work the field of social work education is wide open and accessible by students across spaces. However I have observed that while rural students apply for urban and city based institutes, there are few urban students applying for rural institutes. The general trend as of today is that there is a dominance of rural students in semi-urban and rural based institutes and there is a dominance of urban students in urban based institutes. However much one may desire and try, an effort to admit rural students in urban based institutes does not seem possible. Breaking this barrier is difficult as students from rural areas intersect caste, (English) language competence

and region specific behavioural specificities; traits that urban social work institutes rarely treasure and see as useful. Plus the attraction towards elite upper caste English speaking students among many urban based social work educators still rules the roost in urban located institutes.

Nonetheless Social Work students, with the exception of a few, generally come with a high degree of commitment to the cause of the oppressed or to other related issues such as environment protection, sustainable livelihoods, development, human rights, etc. While I have observed that there is a general distaste for theory, with a thrust more on practice, they are keen to understand macro structural issues. In a number of occasions students have shared that they find certain courses 'meaningless', especially those with an increased focus on behaviour and pathology. There is however a small portion of students whose interest in cognitive-behavioural issues far outweighs socio-structural issues. In feedback meetings that I have sat where students shared their experience of two years in the last days of their stay in campus, they would give very interesting insights into what they go through in the two years of training. One student gave this feedback to me: 'when I had come to join the programme, there was so much enthusiasm and commitment. Now that I am about to leave I feel dead, exhausted and have lost the meaning as to why I pursued social work studies'. I have heard this feedback from many students over the years. I have often interpreted the above feedback as recognition of the student's awareness about one's frustration with a course that gave nothing more than remedial based information and

description. 'Remedial work' attacks symptoms and promises nothing more than immediate relief. A student who comes to do a Masters programme in social work wants to be the change, hoping to see and experience it both at the levels of theory and practice, all this within the value framework that social work profession professes to uphold.

I. On Curriculum Principles

Social work education at its core is 'education for social change'. It stands for peace and collaborative social relationships and works to realize and uphold peoples' dignity, self respect and self worth. Its vision is attaining an equal and non-hierarchical society where people are ensured universal and equitable access to essential resources. It challenges any form of discrimination and consciously work to eliminate systemic marginalization.

Distinct from other academic programmes, social work education is generally envisioned around three fundamental premises that take into consideration its vision of society and its commitment and methods to realize the same. Thrusting on 'education for change' towards realization of its ideals, its first premise is generally formulated around an 'education that deepens its stated values' in its varied stakeholders which includes educators, students, trainees and practitioners. The second premise is conceptualized around an 'education for service and conscientized livelihood' for those who take up the programme and will in the future become social work practitioners, and finally, the third premise is conceived around an 'education that

capacitates its trainees for knowledge production' for the overall good of society as it progresses in time and space.

II. On Curriculum Structure / Component

Drawing upon the above premises, let me first begin to critically reflect separately upon each of the components of the social work curriculum. I begin by looking at fieldwork, followed by Group Labs, Rural Practicum, Methods and last but not the least, the time table. Since each of these reflections are my personal views on each component, they are kind of disconnected. However they are linked to the overarching social work programme framework in every way.

(i)Fieldwork: On many occasions I have had to explain to my colleagues from the social sciences the difference between the fieldwork' that is practiced in social work education as compared to the concept of fieldwork as practiced in the social science. I opine that the fieldwork that we practice in social work is very different from fieldwork as generally understood in the social sciences. While the description of these differences in detail is outside the scope of this chapter, I would however like to touch upon some salient features. In social work education, field work constitutes one symbiotic half of the teaching-learning process, the other component being caste/class room teaching. It is conceived as a space in society and ecology where the agent (social worker) would consciously and actively participate in the process of change towards realisation of social work ideals. The idea that through this process, the change agent would be capacitated to produce

new knowledge about reality is but one objective of fieldwork. While this is generally the case for the social sciences, the same does not hold true for social work education. Other objectives such as actively mobilising people for change, engaging peoples struggles for better access to state resources, assisting peoples in welfare practice, intervening in situations where people need support whether psychological or social, strengthening peoples livelihoods, etc constitute the many other aims of social work fieldwork. Further the demands of praxis in field work, opens up opportunities to both student and educator to deepen their own understanding of social reality and also clarify the role of the 'change agent' in the process of continuous engagement.

The social work programmes at the Master's-level are generally divided into four semesters over a period of two years. In this context I strongly believe that each of the semesters within the two year Master's programme of social work has their own content thrust and concomitant pedagogical processes. In an earlier article[118] I had reflected deeply on processes related to social work supervision and other components of field work engagement. Through my personal experience i consider it important to unravel and state the premises in which field work could probably be formulated:

1. First Semester: Period of unlearning,

2. Second Semester: Period of contextual deepening,

118 Please see chapter four of the book for a better understanding of my conceptions of field work

3. Third Semester: Period of intense engagement with self in context towards producing practice based output.

4. Fourth Semester: Period of intense engagement with self in context towards expansive conceptual insights and ability to theorize

On the structuring and location of fieldwork within the curriculum I believe that the debates about fieldwork in social work education has been framed and will probably be so for a longer period of time, about how it is organised rather than why we do it. That fieldwork in social work is fundamental is agreed by most educators. This is so because in social work education the thrust is on epistemological reconstruction and being immersed in the context is one of the way in which a learner can be nudged to become both knowledgeable about the 'social' and use such knowledge through direct engagement to empower people as a 'practitioner'. To take away the component of fieldwork from social work education is to turn social work education into any other social science education. However having stated the above let me turn to the persistent and perennial debates in social work education about fieldwork. Should fieldwork be organised through a concurrent process with class teaching? or should fieldwork be located as a block of not less than thirty days per semester either before or after some amount of teaching has been committed?

On this matter i would opine after some reflections that the structure of how we organise fieldwork should be

conceived as per the demands of the field and the context. There are some fields of practice in social work education that require concurrent placement, as in two days or three days per week augmented by class room teaching in the remaining days of the week. This acts as a very responsive way in which the student can engage in informed praxis. However there are some fields of practice that require intense and continuous engagement with the field without which the student would find great difficulty in making any sense of the field or make any meaning of the engagement. Such placements requiring continuous and longer duration of practice are generally those that relates to structure and structural issues. I would disagree in this context with those who argue that one-system-fits-all and that all social work fieldwork must be organised in only one particular way.

(ii) Group Labs: Group laboratory in social work education is an interesting addition to social work curriculum. The main objectives of lab sessions with students, organised in the initial stages of the programme, are related to facilitating reflexive, egalitarian and participatory group processes within and among students, while arming them with skills that could come in handy during field work engagement. The group labs at face value seem noble. But like many other components in the curriculum, there are problems that are somewhat generated by ideological tussles between the remedialist and structural perspectives. Having had the opportunity to experience the Group laboratory within social work curriculum, both as a trainee and trainer over a period of six years, I feel that it is imperative to revisit some of the

group lab exercises organised during the lab sessions with students and the pedagogy that is used. The increased psychologising of social work education by remedialist, posing lab sessions purely on remedialist lines, thereby labelling and subjecting social work education to individual centricism is a matter of concern. This is so because such processes are most likely to subject the social work discipline and the profession to increased depoliticization which defeats the very vision and mission of social work's liberatory and pro change agendas.

(iii) Rural Practicum: Rural Practicum is one of the most innovative formulations made by social work educators that over the years have been mainstreamed in social work education. The thrust given to the notion 'rural' within social work programmes has challenged and altered the very urban centric conception and character of social work teaching. Rural Practicum has various facets especially pertaining to pedagogy, location and content. While there are debates and discussion about what should constitute rural practicum and how should rural practicum be located within the larger social work programme, the incorporation of the rural practicum in social work curriculum has served an important purpose - that of deepening social work education around the notion of the 'rural'.

Over the years, having accepted the tremendous richness added and importance of the rural practicum component, I have engaged myself in clarifying certain content and pedagogical issues that would sharpen the practicum process. In trying to clarify these processes I have had to confront certain issues of pedagogy and context, such as-

how does one organize a practicum within a perspective, what role is envisioned for the community (generally Dalit and Tribe) in the training of social work personnel, what are the theoretical and practical components of the Rural Practicum, what pedagogy is most suited for the engagement in Rural Practicum and what are the field assignments that will strengthen the process, insert rigor and strengthen seriousness of purpose in students.

(iv) Methods: In the context of social work practice, methods are constituted by frameworks and technical rules which lay down the procedures for how one should proceed with analysis and intervention. As procedural rules, they tell social workers what to do and what not to do if they want their intervention to make any significant 'impact'. Methods lay down the procedures for comprehending an issue, for designing an intervention strategy and the process of applying the same. Also for clarifying the way and nature of receiving feedback, of monitoring change and of the application of newer strategies. While the above framework is not difficult to comprehend and may even seem harmless, viewed critically, one tends to question the source, ideological position and epistemic premises in which 'methods' are formulated and constructed both theoretically, and as part of a 'skill set' in the arena of practice.

The historicity of social work methods reveals its deep American roots - this now being common knowledge among social work educators in India. In this context, a question often heard in many social work discussions relates to, 'the diagnostic thrust of the methods developed

in America and eastern Europe and later imported to India - how relevant, how efficacious, and how practical?' This question has never been so real as much as it is today with the kind of realities that we experience in India. It is not difficult to see that in a method one does not only import a way of 'doing' but also a way of looking, a perspective, a world view. The western perception of the marginalized, exploited and the discriminated is at best paternalistic and if scrutinized thoroughly, are delimiting and greatly disempowering. With such an approach, one may question its ability to empower the 'marginalized populace' of the 'third world'. What we do, our behaviour and our interventions greatly depend on how we view and see the world. The dichotomy of how someone 'sees' and what one 'does' is only for the purpose of analyses; one cannot separate these two during the course of practice. In this context the time has come to give serious thought to redefining social work methods and incorporate perspectives beyond the delimiting diagnostic schools.

(v) Time Table: The 'Time Table' of any programme is the mediating tool between the overarching macro curriculum frame, the courses and its content and the micro pedagogical processes. The curriculum's aims and objectives are realized and manifested in courses and pedagogy, but throughout, the process is guided, laid down and mediated by the structure of a time table. My personal experience tells me that efficacy of a programme is greatly dependent on the structure of a time table.

However the time table is often considered the most apolitical mandatory activity in social work curriculum

formation. It is an opinion most carries, that the same is best confined to the wisdom of the administrative section rather than being made a responsibility of a Teaching faculty. However having been fortunate enough to avail the opportunity to be the convener of a committee that structures the time table of a social work programme and also a social work concentration over a period of seven years, I have now come to see that the time table is far more than what it seems to be. From these experiences, I have gained insights into minute processes that have simply demolished every single notion I held prior to taking up the responsibility. I now opine that a time table in Social Work Programmes is definitely not 'merely an innocent activity' devoid of any political nuances. In reality, it is a conscious political project complete with, and fuelled from all corners by perspective tussles, ideological tensions, preposterous stakeholder demands and above all, subtle political agendas.

What do we see when we look at the time table of a Social Work Programme? Is it the allocation of systematized time for teaching, properly organized schedules, well laid out structures of learning, a proper location of individual courses and above all, a physical tangible output of curriculum principles? I have often found myself wondering on many occasions, why is there so much tension manifested through debates around the location of specific courses in a semester; especially Methods courses, like Casework, Groupwork, Community Organization and Social Action. Should Casework be taught first or should it be Social Action. While there are educators who are bent on introducing Social Work through Casework teaching,

other educators would prefer Social Action while others still would prefer Community Organization. I have now come to see that the time table is the best mirror of the perspective and holding ideologies (dominant) of a programme at a period in time. It reveals the dominating perspective from the location of courses, faculty perception about 'social work' as a profession and it reflects the political position of the programme in context. Notwithstanding the fact that normal social work educator's physical demands of early morning classes, long distance of travel, weekend teachings, etc which are purely logistical, the location of courses in the overall semester is where political agendas are situated and thus unravelled.

III. On Pedagogical Frameworks

When it comes to any discussion on pedagogy in social work education, there arises a natural political tension between educators who subscribe to the remedial school and those who are positioned around the structural school. Epistemologically, while the remedial school perceives its task to be intervention at the individual level (located within a functionalist episteme), the structural school sees its task as intervention at the systemic level mostly focussing on system and structure, manifest through collective action and policy practice (located within a structural/conflict episteme). While there is an agreement at some levels that no matter what the context and contestations between these two contending perspectives, a social work curriculum at its core must reflect a sound analysis of contemporary reality. However when it comes to pedagogy, the case is that the more dominant manifest

perspective generally takes over the teaching-learning process.

External, yet connected to pedagogy, it is interesting to note that if the perspective thrust of social work in a particular period in time is remedial, the likelihood that courses stressing on cognition, affect and behaviour would occupy more space in teaching content. Thus courses such as Human Growth and Behaviour, Life span and life cycle approach, Casework and even Group Work would take centre stage. In such a framework these courses are conceived as the core content of the social work programme. Added to this would follow a whole gamut of behavioural manipulation strategies which includes 'Group Labs', Institutional visits, training, etc.

However if the thrust of the programme, on the other hand is structural, the likelihood that content related to democracy, development, justice, equality, culture, identity would make up the core of the teaching content. Courses such as those discussing Caste, Class, Gender, Ethnicity, State, Market, Democracy and Development in India, Political Theory, Polity, Governance and Public Policy, Modern Indian History, Political Economy, Globalization, Anti-oppressive Social work, etc are likely to take centre stage especially in the first year of the programme.

Thus it could be argued that the principle that governs curriculum formulation in social work is greatly dependent on a 'holding dominant perspective'. This perspective also manifests itself in a vision statement of a programme and in course content, generally represented by name of

courses.

Most of the above issues discussed, finally manifest in pedagogy. While an overarching pedagogical framework is generally agreed upon, as in the way we frame and teach methods, or fieldwork and even other social work courses, nonetheless, one cannot miss the point that even after pedagogical frame is laid down, what finally matters is- who teaches rather than what is taught. Within this context I would like to reflect upon three pedagogical principles which I personally consider important for social work education to take note off.

1. Pedagogy formulated on conceiving knowledge acquisition as a truth seeking life process:

Among many social work educators, social work is envisioned as an educational process and a means towards personal growth, social consciousness, and acquiring deep sense of empathy for others, self fulfilment, deepening sensitivity to other realities and cultures with a willingness and natural proclivity to act for the good of others. The life of every individual is characterized by a process of constant change directed towards self-realization, that in the process, acquires a socio-political taste imbued with profound love for the world and for fellow beings, intense faith in them and an endogenous feeling to do 'good' to all beings; humans or non-humans. Seen within this framework, social work education is time spent to connect and deepen such values in oneself while in constant relation with others within a social work programme.

2. Pedagogy formulated on conceiving knowledge acquisition as a power acquiring process:

There are other educators within social work education who perceive the knowledge acquisition process as an act of gaining more power for self and for community or in other words, acts that leads to an equal distribution of power among communities. In the context in which our education is offered, there are peoples whose communities have been subjected to historical marginalization and thus excluded from the process of power. More power to the marginalised then becomes a pedagogical premise. It is not without substance that a person as great as Babasaheb Dr.B.R.Ambedkar made a call to education as the primary basis for reclaiming power in a hierarchical society such as those we find in India. His famous "Educate, Agitate, Organise" conceived education of the excluded as the key means by which change in power relations could take place. Among many social work educators whose perspectives are structural as compared to those who adhere to a functionalist perspective, define their engagement much in consonance with the above slogan of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar. Knowledge imparted within this pedagogical framework is more critical, structural and progressive.

3. Pedagogy formulated on conceiving knowledge acquisition as a livelihood mobility process:

Another way in which social work education is conceived relies on seeing social work as a process towards acquiring the ability to guarantee livelihood among its trainees and students within the framework of a profession. While

seeming apolitical for its thrust on individual growth, the perspective does contribute tremendously to the growth of self and the profession. However there is tendency among educators to lean too heavily on social work only being a profession and thereby ending up depoliticizing social hierarchies.

Conclusion

Social Work curriculum and pedagogy, in my opinion are fundamental in social work education. It is innovations in curriculum and pedagogy that makes social work programmes stay abreast with changing times and challenges faced in difficult political environments. That there is a need for more reflection on curriculum and pedagogy is something that many educators do not disagree. However from what is available in terms of social work literature, it is clear that not much work is going on in this domain.

Current demands on social work education for innovative and newer ways of formulating social work content are being felt across social work institutes. This has become much more pertinent in the light of the introduction of Distance Social Work programmes by IGNOU and the recent emergence of the Social Work Education Network (SWEN) under the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. However while there have been attempts to reformulate and thus rejuvenate social work education, making it relevant to context, yet the discipline is yet to seriously re-imagine itself under these new historical circumstances.

Chapter VI

Some Thoughts on Navayana Social Work

The secret of Zen is just two words : not always so…Anonymous

Social work education and social work educators in India are confronted by an extremely chaotic and a politically charged complex social reality. The Indian populace has distinct traits marked around caste, language, , region, ethnic and religious lines. The country has more than two thousand ethnic groups with many more sub-groups spread out along caste and non-caste (tribal) realities. 'There are 4693 communities, which include several thousands of endogamous groups, speak in 325 functioning languages and write in 25 different scripts'.[119] Its population of 1,210,854,977 (2011), is characterized by a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-lingual and multi-religious environment which is heavily skewed by rural habitats over urban agglomerations. This kind of an extremely untidy concrete condition poses a big challenge to social workers who find it very difficult to comprehend and intervene, thus making theorization an uphill task.

Further the political economic conditions currently encapsulating the Indian context are such that we are in that juncture of social work history when theoretical clarity, depth and width, plus a more grounded axiological understanding are being felt to be an urgent necessity.

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119 Ramachandran, R. (2008, June 6), Genetic Landscape. Frontline Magazine , p. 90.

This chapter, in many ways is posited to respond to these emerging complexities, attempting to provide theoretical insights about social reality through the gaze of navayana social work. However I wish to seek pardon from the reader that since the ideas expressed in this chapter is very new, am myself in the process of clarifying and deepening both its theory and practice.

Nonetheless, while operating consciously on such a shortcoming, what I will try to do is lay down these still rudimentary but equanimous reflections of mine around five specific domains. The first is an attempt to unravel the fundamental theoretical premise of navayana social work. The second will discuss how perspective building could take place within the framework. This will be followed by some thoughts on the positionality of navayana social work within the various schools of social work. The fourth engages with my understanding of curriculum and pedagogical principles within this framework and at the end I will think out loud the learning/educating process of teaching 'skills' in the navayana framework.

How to look at Reality the Navayana Way

Navayana ways of seeing and thinking is very different both in the process of perceiving and 'acts of knowing'. The 'text' in the navayana framework is not written within the framework of 'meaning making' and requires a counter-intuitive approach to engaging with the same. I thus caution the reader not to expect to immediately 'understand' the text. My attempt in this first section is to slowly go 'beyond meaning' and derive perspectives and

principles from such a locale. This is difficult since language itself, being formulated on binary principles, are not outside the meaning making process. However from a 'beyond binary' perspective when dualities are eventually resolved into a unity, a 'text' within such a locale becomes merely an indicator. They must not be taken as 'given' and absolute.

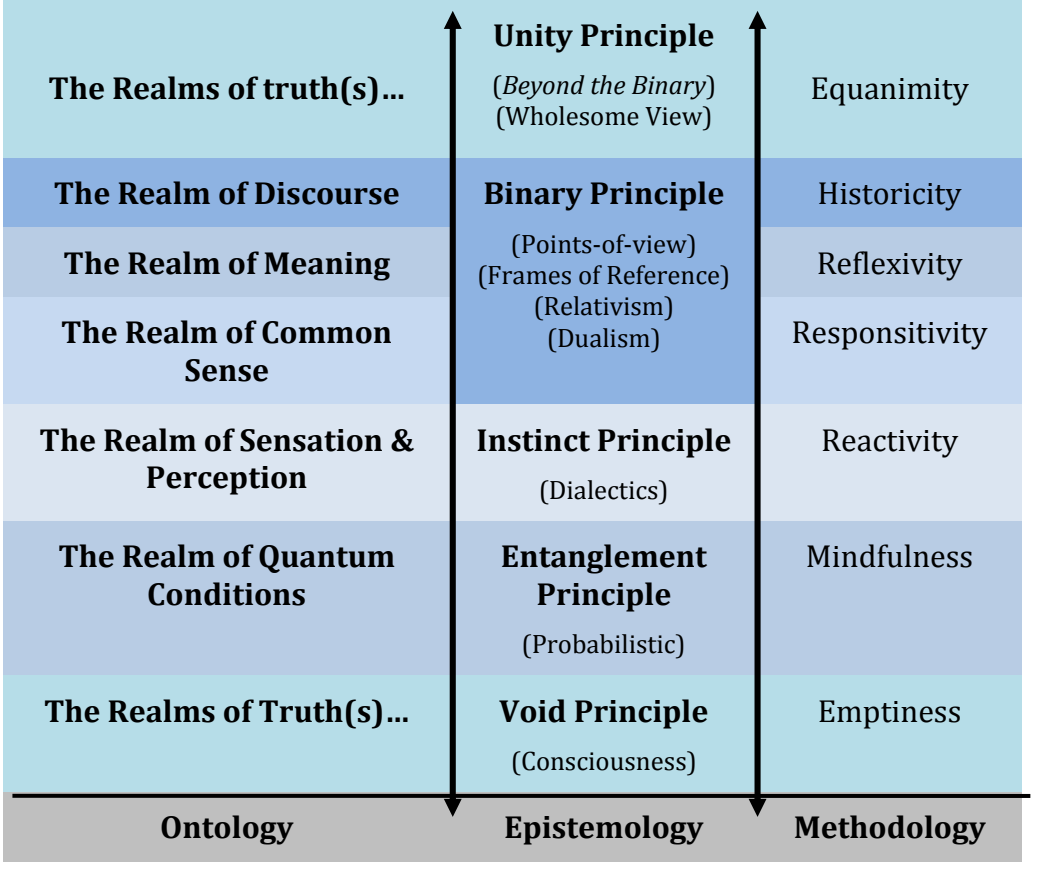
At the core of Navayana ways of looking lays aesthetics/ethics. Aesthetics and ethics in this framework are one. They are two separate conceptual entities only when viewed and experienced from a location that is fundamentally dualistic. Beyond dualism they reverberate as a unified pulsating wholesome experience. The navayana way of looking stems from the subtle truths much beyond the dualistic mind and constitutes a more wholesome, holistic way of experiencing the self in the social world.

There are multiple ways of engaging and representing reality, both apparent and the underlying, from a navayana perspective. Based on my own experience, I will attempt to provide a glimpse of how I personally imagine such a reality through a self explanatory framework, as shown in Diagram 19. I have titled this framework as 'The Seven Navayana Realms'.

I use the word *realm* here to signify the fluidity of movement from one realm to another. These realms are not water tight compartments of lived experience or realities and there are no rigid lines separating one realm from another. I have used the same in the diagram for ease in meaning making with the simple intention of initiating

the reader into an alternative way of looking. The number *seven* within the seven realms are also merely for the sake of simplicity in representation. There are, at least in my conception, countless realms which cannot be boxed in the way I have done. Following this brief simplistic representation of the seven navayana realms, I will then attempt to discuss a more complex level of the "navayana way of looking within to see without".

Diagram 19. The Seven Navayana Realms



In brief, just as a short explanatory note to the propositions about the seven navayana realms, the realm of quantum conditions constitutes of the realm of dark energy, dark matter and atomic matter. The realm of sensation and

perception constitutes of our five sense organs and sense experience. The realm of common sense constitutes of thought, words, cognition and concepts. The realm of meaning constitutes of purpose and categories. The realm of discourse constitutes of theory, the cosmological arguments and the source of power. The realms of truth(s)… which lies beyond discourse and quantum conditions constitutes the axiological realm and a reality experienced 'as it is'. Each of these realms have their concomitant epistemological and methodological processes.

In the next part of this section I will attempt to unravel a navayana conception of perspective building. By perspective building I mean a way to provide a framework full of open ended spaces for showing the way towards deepening insights into the realms of reality. I will try to conceive such a perspective as emanating from 'beyond the binary' framework.

It will be difficult to comprehend, especially for those whose knowledge pursuit is grounded fundamentally in 'search after meaning'. But such is the perspectives emanating from the 'unity beyond the binary' that the usage and even the symbolic presentation of such a locale is both counter intuitive and beyond the bounded vessel of rationality. From my personal experience, an engagement in the deepening of perspectives (especially with my students) is a process. Thus it is important to take time and reflect deeply on what I present below. As one gaze into what is presented, it is important to engage in satipatthana,[120] that

[120] Satipatthana is a pali word that refers to 'turning your gaze within' or 'self-introspection', a practice that often requires tremendous

is, to turn one's gaze within oneself and to equanimously[121] observe how it engages your imagination in the domain of 'perspective' or ways of seeing the world. It is important to note (at least from my point-of-view) that no perspective is perfect nor a 'given'. We must be wary when one's mind convinces the 'self' that the perspective that one currently has is perfect, a given and is complete. Insights from those people who have gone through deep experience in the said domain, points to the process that when one's perspective has become more holistic, wholesome, and one is able to see things in the 'round', one will have arrived at a point of knowing. None however can see this except the 'seeking-knowing self'.

As I have asserted above, the navayana way of engaging with text is very different and those who are looking at making immediate meaning with the presented text will find it 'meaningless'. This is because the textual representation attempts to break the principle of binary conception.

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effort, concentration and mindfulness. This is not an easy task in the light of the fact that most of our human senses are positioned to the see, touch, taste, hear and smell the external world rather than the multiple processes going on within the bounded self.

121 Equanimity is a human capacity beyond reactivity, responsitivity, reflexivity and historicity. While at the level of sensations and sense data we are capable of 'reaction', at the level of shared sensation or common sense we are capable of 'responding', beyond common sense and in the level of abstract concepts, categories and meanings we are capable of being 'reflexive', the pursuit of 'that' which is beyond meaning requires another human capacity that is possible but needs to be cultivated. It is to this realm that equanimity is possible… For those who have experienced the crisis or 'cracking' up of the mind, they will know what equanimity is….

For example if one was to attempt writing a text from a navayana way, it would probably read as follows:

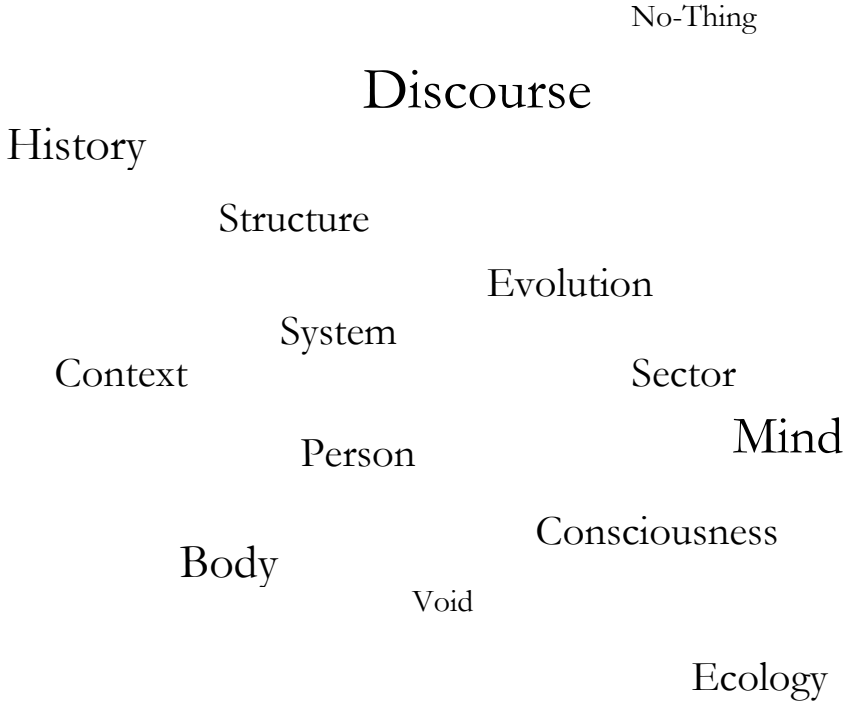
...the text is always wrong…the text is not the reality…some say there is nothing outside the text…the world is a creation of the mind…the mind works on binary principles…the mind plays a beautiful dualistic meaning making game with and through words…reality itself is a creation of such a mind…beyond the binary lies the reality… there is so much more reality(s) beyond text…

Any reader viewing the syntax above from a binary lens would find such a text perplexing. But when viewed from 'beyond the binary' it might probably point to underlying realities that are not immediately apparent.

There is another way of representing the text from a navayana perspective, in a way I am more familiar with and a technique I have often used with my students in the learning/educating process. I have also shared the same in training workshops that I conducted for other social work institutes. I will share the same just as an exercise in navayana ways of seeing and thinking. I have titled the representation as 'From a place beyond the binary: looking *Within* to seeing *without*'.

The reading of the same is positioned in ways directly connected to the representation of the seventh navayana realm, with its concomitant epistemology(s) and methodology(s) as shown in Diagram 19. My intention is to gently enter the space in which all dualities are processually resolved into a unity and begin to look at the social reality from the lens that such a location avails.

From a place beyond the binary: looking *Within* to see *without*[122]…



122 Since language itself is constructed on binary principles and have proclivity to set the rules of thinking and meaning making for the reader as represented in Diagram 19, I have used a different way - a navayana way to present the same idea. While I would have preferred to leave the fluid conceptual representation as it is and open it for the reader to make their own connection(s) and meaning(s) of the set of interconnected and interdependent concepts/epistemologies, it suffice to say that I have arrived at these concepts/epistemologies after some deep reflection and have thus located them accordingly. However there is no fix rule of why they have been positioned in specific locations. As you can see, the intention is to move beyond the construction and production of a structure of meaning that is fixed, stable, universal and ahistorical. Instead an attempt is made to transcend the binary and enter the domain of the fluid, the unstable, the diverse, the historical, the discursive, the void… power is everywhere…oh its agency…where is the subject…turn the gaze inwards… real but not there…you don't even exist, how can you die…

Navayana Social Work : Theoretical Location

It is important that I begin by locating the idea of Navayana Social Work within current existing frames of social work. This will facilitate the understanding of its positionality in the multiplicity of ideas. I will thus improve on the earlier framework that I have developed in Diagram 10 that shows the different social work practices that prevails in India. The list, as I have stated is not exhaustive and many more can be positioned within the frame.

As one can observe, most of the schools of thought in social work are located around the 'individual', 'community' or 'structure'. They identify these domains as their areas of focus thereby positioning their intervention as such. While one school focuses on 'problems', the other focuses on the 'class structure' , some on 'consciousness' and few more schools on 'meaning'. As I have asserted in the introduction, in India the struggle against caste, patriarchy and class is at the core of perspective and practice among social workers who focus their intervention on structure. Among Indian social workers focusing on community, for some, their interest lies in reforming society and reconstructing a new society, while for others within the community school, they thrust their practice on culture, diversity, dialogue.

Further each school is premised on varied formulations. While some premise their social work on anti-caste and anti-patriarchy, others take a position for change and equality, for raising consciousness and on anti-oppression.

Each position have their own perspectives, born out of the way they conceived social reality.

In such a framework, where does one place Navayana Social Work? From my understanding the navayana perspective does include all of the schools of thought as it is not pitch against any of these, not because it is for or against but because it operates on a totally different realm as shown in Diagram 20 below.

Diagram 20 : Locating navayana social work

<table>
<tr><td>Unity Realm</td><td>Focus on Unity Beyond the Binary</td><td colspan="4">navayana social work
{seekers of truth…(s)}
{Harmonious Wholesome Perspective}</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Binary Realm</td><td>Focus on Structure</td><td>Radical Social Work
(Raisers of consciousness)
{Anti Oppression Perspective }</td><td>Structural Social Work
[Pro Equality]
{Pro Change Perspective}</td><td>Women Centered Social Work
{Anti Patriarchy}
{ Pro Women Perspective}</td><td>Dalit Social Work
{Anti Caste}
{Perspective from below}</td></tr>
<tr><td>Focus on Community</td><td colspan="2">Tribal Social Work
{Diversity - Dialogue}
{Perspective from within}</td><td colspan="2">Gandhian Social Work
{Reform - Reconstruct}
{Perspective from above}</td></tr>
<tr><td>Focus on Individual</td><td colspan="2">Interactionist Social Work
(Seekers after meaning)
{Systems Perspective}</td><td colspan="2">Traditional Social Work
(Fixers)
{Status quo Perspective}</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="5">Note: Howe's labels for each grouping are given in parentheses ( ) and Mullaly's label for Structural Social Work is given in square brackets [ ]. The author's formulations are given in curly brackets { }.</td></tr>
</table>

While navayana is concern about the 'individual', the 'community' and the 'structure', it is also interested and concern with experiences as I have stated in Diagram 20 – a "Focus on Unity Beyond the Binary'. That is to argue that all the other schools of thought in social work focuses fundamentally on binary frames. Navayana on the other hand goes beyond the binary and begins to unravel a social work emanating from such a locale.

For navayana social work the goal and path is the pursuit of truth. In a sense, one could identify such social workers as

seekers of truth or 'truth seekers', which transcends the dialectics of meaning that is fundamental to the 'seekers after meaning' . Some people make the mistake of thinking that 'truth seekers' are nihilist who leave society and live the life of 'hermits'. But actually it is the other way round. 'Truth Seekers' from a navayana Perspectives are soaked and grounded in the day to day struggle in society.

It is difficult to understand the conceptions of perspectives in navayana social work. This is because the idea per se cannot be contained or defined by word. Words are too limited to capture the 'meaning' of what it signifies. The idea itself is beyond meaning. It has entered the realms of 'truth', for whatever 'truth' (plural) might mean. It is not an idea that is easily comprehensible by mere sensation, definitely not by common sense, probably and only probably, by theoretical and discourse. Yet even discourse is not close enough. This difficulty is simply because words must die for a non-binary reality to emerge and for the self to begin to experience being from such a locale. This is the best that I can say about the possibility of getting a peep into such a reality, since it is beyond the rational and no more operates within the dialectical binary mind.

Further in Diagram 20, I have noted the perspective as 'harmonious wholesome perspective'. The word 'harmonious wholesome' is closely related to other words like total, cyclic, holistic, perfect, proper and overarching.

Within the navayana framework there is a fundamental shift away from seeing the 'mind' as the fundamental bases of life, or the most stable premise of a self that perceives,

experiences, understands and know the world. This shift happens because there is a turning away of the gaze from the perceived external observable reality to the reality experienced within the bounded physical body.

When one begins engaging satipatthana, it is posited that once this gaze is turned away from the 'without' towards the 'within', the sublime four states or 'subtle truths' that begins to unravel are Upekkha,[123] Mudita,[124] Karuna[125] and Metta[126]. The person who has worked deeply into clarifying these processes is a 'tathaghata' or 'truth seeker', and the theorist par excellence who has unraveled these processes deeply is Siddhatto Gotamo. He lived and shared his teachings ('teaching' is too rigid a word, 'pointing to the path' is better), arrived at through his own humanly attempts and experience with the hoipolloi of current day

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123 Upekkha here is translated as equanimous, looking within to look without. It is beyond the 'reactive', the 'responsive', the 'reflexive', which are ways of seeing and reflecting that are grounded fundamentally in a binary conception of social reality. Upekkha refers to the observer that arises within self that is detached from the mind, can observe it and not fall prey to its diktat. Upekkha is a method, a capacity and a state of being.

124 Mudita is happiness experienced in the body with the dilution of binary conceptions and the experience of the initial unity beyond the binary. It is not pleasure that is often derived from the assuaging the five sense organs, but happiness arising from the harmonious relationship of the melting binaries.

125 Karuna is used here to refer to compassion, a state deeper than empathy and sympathy that arises as a way of experiencing and seeing the social world.

126 Metta is used to refer to loving kindness emanating from a state of 'samma'. Samma is often translated as harmonious. This is the locale of deeper levels of the state of unity that is becoming free from binary mind centric experience.

Nepal and North India about 2500 years ago. He pointed this path to many who in turn have, over the years, further expanded and deepen the same across the world.

The word Navayana on the other hand, which means the 'New Vehicle' was posited by Dr.B.R.Ambedkar in 1956 when together with half a million people embraced the framework as formulated by Siddhatto Gotamo. As a matter of history, the framework of Gotamo was destroyed and banished from the land of its birth for nearly 2000 plus odd years. Dr.B.R.Ambedkar brought back to the consciousness of people this framework that had experienced a near complete annihilation. While re-embracing it, he historicized the content, contextualized the practice and cleansed it from theoretical distortions that were inserted by vested interest to fundamentally destroy the same.[127] It is to this cleansed framework that the word 'Navayana' is referred to in this section.

This then is the probable location of navayana social work as a school of thought in social work. It is an idea, a perspective, a philosophy and also a practice.

The Guiding principles of the navayana learning/educating process in the Indian Context

Over the years, as I engaged more intensely and deeply with the learning/educating process in social work education, I did gain some interesting insights into curriculum building, pedagogical practices and the learning/educating process.

[127] More readings on the subject can be made on the numerous writings of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar himself and of the writings of Laxmi Narasu, and Iyothee Thass.

There is an important methodological interjection that needs to be made here regarding social work training. One thing about social work education that stands out amongst the social and applied sciences and a process that I personally value, is the innovative curriculum, which thrust on many organic dimensions of learning rather than merely lectures, reading, research and thinking. The component of an engaged fieldwork, rather than a data-collection oriented fieldwork, which embedded in social work education is in my opinion the most fundamental pedagogical strategy of the learning/educating process in social work.

These multiple very enriching ways of learning, embodied in the social work curriculum are processes that I have engaged deeply with and learnt from. However the insights gained have also come about from responsibilities entrusted on me to develop the curriculum of a Concentration and later a Masters in Art in Social Work in Dalit and Tribal Studies and Action in the Institute that I teach. The demands made on me to ground theoretical content to the Indian context, the pedagogy to be used for the learning/thinking/action community and the curriculum to be framed to set the tone and sight of the learning/educating process on the path of knowledge pushed me into spaces that required a multi-pronged approach to curriculum building. But even though the task was multiple, the curriculum building process also demanded that I articulate a succinct and cohesive framework of the learning/educating process under the framework of Master's programme.

In the light of this I will attempt to recollect and bring together some of my thoughts that acted like an epistemological guide post while in the process of engaging in the above task. The axiological intention is posited at two levels. One is to share these insights with the social work sorority, and the other is to provide a peep into the overarching perspectives and ideas that informs the formulation and content of my ideas. Laced throughout the following text are certain 'guide post' that ran across my thinking process while writing this section.

Over the years, as one engages more deeply with the learning and teaching process in social work education, I have began to think seriously about guiding principles in the learning/educating process. The opportunity to unravel and understand these guiding principles also came to me when I had to develop the Concentration and later Masters in Art in Social Work in Dalit and Tribal Studies and Action. Below I will attempt to share my insights on these dynamic guidelines, more so as a means to provide a way to understand the Navayana learning/educating process. These principles arose as and when I attempted to produce teaching content located fundamentally in a Navayana perspective. Many have also come about from detailed intellectual discussions with my own students and in deeper reflections with some of my colleagues and the Navayana community.

I strongly believe, and this is rooted in the Indian context, that it is a historical responsibility for social work educators to fundamentally alter the learner from a 'Recipient of Knowledge' to a 'Producer of Knowledge'. The danger with

social work education is that it is trapped in received theories that indirectly accept a position of 'recipient' rather than a 'producer'. This is at times projected through our students. I hold firm to the argument that social work theories are cornered and invisibilised by western theory. Such processes began as early as 1492, when the Western European colonial project kick-started. These Western theories beginning in the 1600s that have now become universal have also absorbed social work education in India as part of its territorializing project. If one is not aware of this larger colonizing project, one reproduces such processes through students. Interestingly engaging in western theories gives one a sense of philosophical sophistication and superiority, but only a few can see how western theory indirectly ties one to the rules of knowledge production that presupposes the superiority of the western european mind/gaze over all others.

These processes of invisibilization are difficult to decipher for one who is not looking deeply enough. How does one counter this? My position on this is that we must deepen the learner's ways and the learning process itself around the principle of engaging with reality from 'context' to 'theory' rather than from 'theory' to 'context'. Here both the teacher and the taught are to be fundamentally rooted in decolonial thinking and equanimous engagement. A challenge to such a project is to turn the very framework that perceives non Western Europeans as recipients of their knowledge to producers of knowledge.

This however does not mean that we must reject everything Western; instead we should learn its 'language' and expand

the conceptual repertoire of both teacher and taught. In the process we refine reflexive thinking skills across contextual, language and knowledge domains. The only process we must be awake to is the epistemological tussles that 'must' take place against what Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) identifies as 'western' being equated to 'universal' and the non-Western as 'particulars'.[128]

In addition to the above, I also strongly hold on to the principle that all social knowledge is historical, bound by body, space-time and context. Any claim that social knowledge can be ahistorical and (uni)versal is a myth. Thus, in my point-of-view, thinking historically is fundamental to knowledge and a very important process especially in India. I see engagements grounded on such premises as part of what I believe is fundamental in social work education, that is, the attempts at epistemological reconstruction.

Further, I have come to realize through the years as a educator that very less learning takes place among students till such time that the learner take ownership of her/his own learning process. Once the learning process has begun it is important to posit the same on a path that is

128 The indigenous people's scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith makes a critical point on this stating "The globalization of knowledge and Western culture constantly reaffirms the West's view of itself as the centre of legitimate knowledge, the arbiter of what counts as knowledge and the source of 'civilized' 'universal' knowledge, available to all and not really 'owned' by anyone, that is, until non-Western scholars make claims to it. When claims like that are made history is revised (again) so that the story of civilization remains the story of the West." From her book "Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples" published by Zed Books Ltd., p.63.

fundamentally rooted in a search for justice, civility, democratic participation, anti-oppression and social inclusion, gaining in the process self-respect, dignity and freedom of mind for both teacher and taught.

Finally, I also believe that no matter what pedagogical practices are operationalised within both the learning/educating process, we must always employ a pedagogy that heals…Now this is something which only the excluded and oppressed understand. Healing however requires everyone to participate.

These ideas above that I have recollected based on my experience can be stated as curriculum and pedagogical principles. They are definitely not exhaustive but constitutes of a few ideas that came about as and when I engaged with the multiple context(s). These principles are as follows:

- First Principle: From a 'Recipient of Knowledge' to a 'Producer of Knowledge'. We can also perceive the learner as a ‘Co-Producer of Knowledge’.

- Second Principle: Deepening the learner’s process of learning from context to theory.

- Third Principle: Both teacher and taught fundamentally rooted in decolonial thinking and equanimous engagement.

- Fourth Principle: Expand language and conceptual repertoire of both teacher and taught and refine reflexive thinking skills.

- Fifth Principle: Nothing is ahistorical and given, we always need to historicise and engage in historical thinking

- Sixth Principle: The learner take ownership of their own learning process

- Seventh Principle: Informed and equanimous action in process

- Eighth Principle: Grounded in valuing civility, democratic participation, justice and social inclusion

- Ninth Principle: Always towards self-respect, dignity and freedom of mind

- Tenth Principle: Epistemological reconstruction as fundamental in the learning process. This is a means to becoming a wholesome being

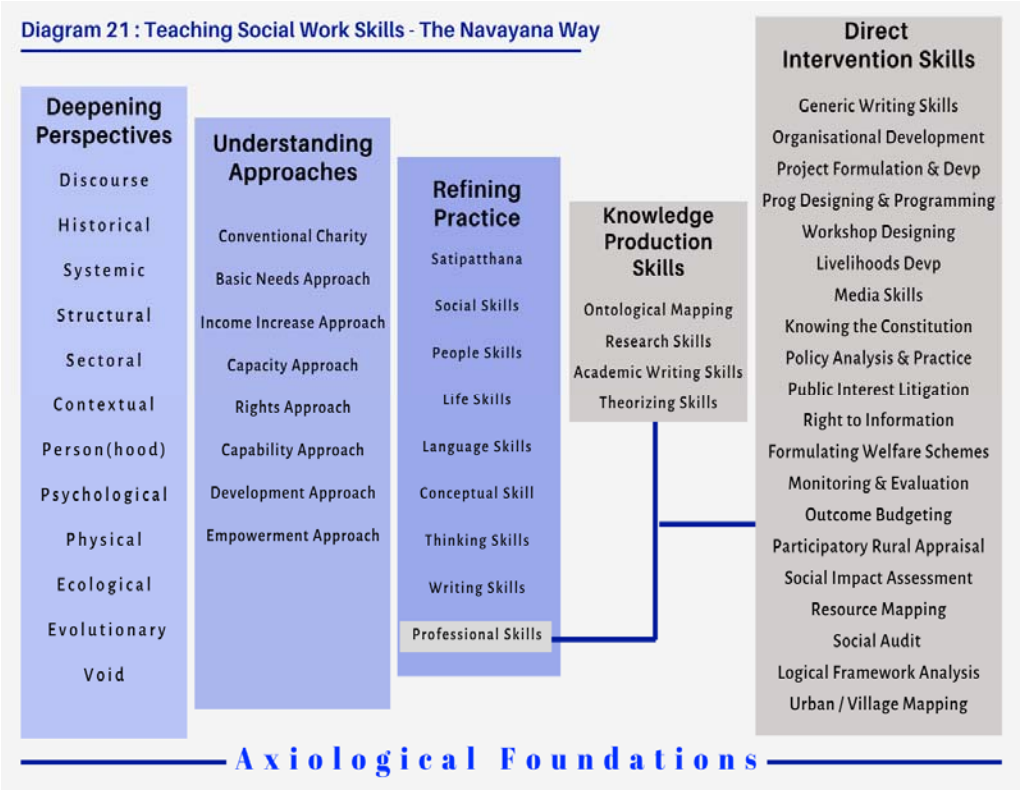
- Eleventh Principle: Towards an education and a pedagogy that heals…

Teaching Social Work 'Skills': The navayana way…

Over the years I have been reflecting on the subject of transmitting skills in social work practice. In these reflections I have been confronted with many fundamental questions such as how do we conceive the idea of skill? Is skill outside of perspective? Can skills be taught? If it can be taught, then how does one approach the learning/educating process of 'skills' in social work? What is the suitable pedagogy to use to transmit skills to a learning/educating community?

In attempting to engage with these questions, my initial thought on the subject is that skills in social work include many dimensions and aspects of the learning/educating process. However at its very core lies the conception that every act of doing is fundamentally embedded in the perspective of the doer and vice versa - every perspective embodies the act. The perspective and the act of doing are in unity. The binaries are merely conceptual and even real but not actual.

However from a social workers perspective, the concept of 'skill' in the most fundamental domain of self and being, envelopes a much larger conceptual frame. I have presented the same in Diagram 21 titled 'Teaching Social Work Skills – The Navayana Way'. The idea of 'social work skills' in the way I have positioned it, constitutes of five interrelated domains: (i) a concept driven/centric processes in perspective building (ii) an understanding and knowledge of varied theoretical approaches to practice (iii) the identification and refining of core practice skills (iv) capacity for knowledge production skills and (v) direct field-based intervention skills. This whole framework however is fundamentally grounded on ethics and aesthetics, conceived as core in social work.



Building perspective requires an engagement with a learner's experience around conceptual unraveling and theoretical de-layering. As awareness about perspective begins to take place, clarity about social work models and approaches to field engagement becomes important. This requires the learner to begin refining certain skills both within the self and with the professional self. In the social work profession, there is now an increase demand from trained professionals for expertise in knowledge production and direct field intervention.

From my point-of-view the basic skills required in social work practice are generally divided into three components. The first constitutes of life skills, people's skills and social skills. The second constitutes of language skills, conceptualization skills, thinking skills and writing skills.

The third and the most fundamental is what are contained in satipatthana, mindfulness, 'deep self introspection' or 'self-observation'. These are noted down under the theme – Refining Practice. These, in my opinion are the bedrock of the skill-sets that social workers should possess. Another two skill-sets – knowledge production and direct field intervention are more in the professional domain of practice. All the above stated domains are interdependent. Each feed into the other and each enrich and deepen the other.

The first domain of professional skills which can also be identified as advanced skills concerns knowledge production. In fieldwork training, research is one of the many ways in which a being attempts to deepen and widen one's insights into the world that is fundamentally relative. Gaining expertise and being at ease with ways of producing knowledges is imperative in social work.

Further, the social work profession also requires intervention skills. This stems from various sectors in social reality that as social workers we engage in. These are the sectors of health, housing, food security, education, livelihoods, water, etc. These are major areas of social work intervention and each demands their own sets of skills. While there are some generic skills such as writing, documentation and even computer skill, each sector requires some degree of expertise cutting across a range of skill-sets.

Conclusion

When viewed from beyond the binary, the teaching learning process is both wholesome and holistic. It is neither the search for definitions nor the pursuit of more information; instead it becomes the search for deeper truths and the realization and practice of aesthetics. Growth from this perspective is not measured in financial terms, nor in status but in how humane one is as a being in a binary dualistic world.

Navayana in this sense is a healing process, but a healing process gained through knowledge and insights rather than through more information and a higher status. This learning process is centered within and without the self in society and not out of it. The gains made are for everybody and not for a few.

Chapter VII

De-familiarizing Content and Pedagogical Processes in Fieldwork Supervision [129]

"The teacher and the taught together create the teaching"
Anonymous

In brief, within social work education, field work constitutes one symbiotic half of the teaching-learning process, the other component being class room instruction. The demands of action and reflection in field work, opens up opportunities to both supervisee and supervisor to deepen their understanding of social reality and also clarify the role of the 'change agent'. This chapter focuses on knowledge frameworks, pedagogical processes and constitutive content of fieldwork supervision during the

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[129] This article was first published as a training note of the National Association of Dalit and Tribal Social Workers in 2005. Later I had reworked this note in 2012 and use it for lectures on the subject. This note was written to basically clarify my own thought process while engaging with my field work students. As a pedagogical tool I would ask them to read this paper at the end of their first and second semester fieldwork to get clarity on the processes that I have engaged in. Since 2005 I have been lecturing on this issue from a skill perspective and also taken two workshops on supervisory skills for fieldwork supervisors. In retrospect I feel that some of the issues I discussed are not as sophisticated or very relevant now. But for this book, I have left the training note as it is with some minor improvement in resource and analysis. Over the years I have had many more insights on the same issues and developed different techniques and strategies of field supervision. I have also moved away from being too dependent on western social work theory and have tried to formulate a more context specific and context relevant social work as posited in the previous chapter..

first and second semester of a Master's program in social work.

My attempt is to critically engage with issues concerning social work perspectives, methodological premises, ethical issues, pedagogical congruency and emancipatory content within the supervisee-supervisor relationship.

Fieldwork Engagement in Social Work Education

A number of social work educators from various schools of social work in India have through the years attempted to clarify the fieldwork component in social work education. Singh(1985)[130] while attempting to define field work in social work education stated:

> "Field work in social work is carried out in and through social welfare agencies and communities, where the student learns skills and tests out knowledge according to an educational plan. The whole programme is student and field-specific. Field work training is supervised practice of social work under the guidance of a trained social work educator, or field personnel. It has been defined as an educationally sponsored attachment of social work students to an institution, agency, or a section of community, in which they are helped to extend their knowledge and understanding, and experience the

130 Singh R.R.(Ed.) (1985). Field Work in Social Work Education- A Perspective for Human Service Professions, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi

impact of human needs. Such an experience is deliberately arranged on a whole or part-time basis".

Little (1949)[131] laid down nine broad educational objectives of fieldwork engagement articulating what a social work program should equip students with; from providing students with field work experiences of working with people in simple and complex situations to awareness of the use of social work records as a means of providing continuity of services and a basis for research. Sytz(1949)[132] further posits that to achieve such educational objectives, schools of social work in India should place as much emphasis on structuring field work curriculum as on theoretical contents as part of social work education. As early as 1953, Moorthy[133] while arguing for a scientific approach to field work proposed that "field work is intended to give the student (i) first hand acquaintance of social and personal situations or problems of which he reads; (ii) to inculcate in him the ability to apply techniques developed in each social work area for the solution of the said situations and (iii) to give him experience of the use of routine procedures relating to recording and administration which is incidental to the second". Moorthy also introduced different dimensions in fieldwork training that are important for assisting students to learn. He referred to

131 Cited in Desai, M. M.(1975) Student Recording in Field Work Supervision. Indian Journal of Social Work, Vol.35 (4), p.345-352

132 ibid

133 Moorthy, M. (1953). Scientific Approach to Field Work, Indian Journal of Social Work, Vol.14 (2), p.144-159. 27. Also see Moorthy,M.V & Rao,S.N. (1970). Field Work in Social Work. Andhra University, Andhra

seven sets of circumstances in which a problem is set, or with which a problem is closely knit or tangled. Matthew (1975)[134] posits that "the process of professional education in social work consists of the acquisition of knowledge and skills, values and attitudes appropriate for social work. Class room courses as well as field work instruction are designed and operated in such a way as to facilitate this educational process".

R.R.Singh,[135] published an edited volume titled "Field Work in Social Work Education- A Perspective for Human Service Professions" which detailed fieldwork supervision and micro supervisory processes within Indian social work education. Singh listed specific goals and assignments to be completed for a first and second term which includes observational processes and tools of assessment, understanding and knowledge to programme formulation and implementation. Subhedar (2001)[136] in his book *Fieldwork Training in Social Work* also adds a creative dimension to field training in the form of fieldwork through films. Subhedar argues that "students can learn much faster ways to present their ideas, views, opinions, etc., by observing the effective characterizations in the film".

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134 Mathew, G(1975) Educational and Helping Aspects of Field Work Supervision . Indian Journal of Social Work, Vol.35 (4), 1975, p.325-333. Also see Mathew,G. (1992). An Introduction to Social Casework. Mumbai: Tata Institute of Social Sciences.

135 Singh R.R.(Ed.) (1985). Field Work in Social Work Education- A Perspective for Human Service Professions, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi

136 Subhedar I.S. (2001) Fieldwork Training in Social Work. (Pg. 196) Rawat Publication. Jaipur

The Emergence of a Critical Social Work Episteme from varied Context in the World

In India, as I have stated in the earlier chapters, efforts to insert liberatory and emancipatory elements into Indian social work education, are now visible in some spaces and are being articulated in the public domain. We see the emergence of two organic perspectives that are located within a critical Indian episteme; Dalit Social Work[137] and Tribal Social Work Practice.[138] The above formulations that have arisen from context, point to the emanation of critical organic social work content and theory in Indian social work education.

In other parts of the world as I have pointed out in chapter 2, we also observe the rise of aboriginal social work, indigenous social work, and decolonial social work. In the western world, there are a number of theories within the critical school. An idea that has somewhat caught the attention of many social work educators across the globe is 'anti-oppressive practice'[139]. This is generally understood as

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137 Ramaiah,A. (1998). and bodhi.s.r (2011,)

138 bodhi.s.r (2011,). Also see Akhup, A. (2009). Interface between State, Voluntary Organisation and Tribes: A Perspective towards Tribe-Centered Social Work Practice. Indian Journal of Social Work, 70(4), 507-615.

139 Dalrymple and Burke (1995) describes the practice of working from an Anti Oppressive framework as constituting of personal self knowledge; knowledge and an understanding of the majority social systems; knowledge and understanding of different groups and cultures; knowledge of how to challenge and confront issues on a personal and structural level; awareness of the need to be 'research minded' (Everitt et. al., 1992); commitment to action and change. (p. 18) and contend that these six points, together with an understanding of power and oppression, contribute to the

an umbrella term that encompasses a variety of practice approaches including, but not limited to, radical, structural, feminist, anti-racist, critical, and liberatory frameworks. It represents the current nomenclature for a range of western theories and practices that embrace a social justice perspective.[140] Most of the western social workers who premise their practice within an anti-oppressive position share a few basic characteristics, "they are strongly critical of the oppressive nature of the dominant discourse; they are theoretically incisive in analyzing 'oppression' and see social work fundamentally as an activity of professionally trained people towards social transformation".

Critical Pedagogy in First Year Fieldwork supervision: The Concept and Frame

A. Reassembling Content and Pedagogical Processes

We find a number of articles within Indian social work education articulating aims, objectives and processes related to field work supervision. While some articles lay the framework of various fieldwork components in social work training, discuss educational objectives and helping aspects of supervision such as those of Kapoor, 1961; Maurya, 1962; Khinduka, 1963; Bannerjee, 1972; Thangavelu, 1975,[141] few such as Khinduka, 1962; Mehta, 1975; Desai,

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development of anti-oppressive practice in Carolyn Campbell (2003) Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia. http://aosw.socialwork.dal.ca/index.html.

140 ibid

141 See Bannerjee, G.R (1972). Some Aspects of Field Work Supervision. In Papers on Social Work: an Indian perspective. 270-284. Tata

1975 deal with micro processes related to identifying fieldwork tasks, the importance of recordings and goals of individual and group conferences.[142] It must be noted that while very few social work educators have dwelt deeply into curriculum and pedagogical processes, attempts to articulate the same is now being made.

Across the world, critical social workers as noted by Campbell (2003)[143] have noted down these principles as constituting of (i) a comprehensive conception of the role and responsibility of educators, (ii) promoting critical analysis, (iii) supporting student engagement in learning, (iv) nurturing relationships and establishing community, (v) using experience as a pedagogical base, (vi) facilitating practice and classroom discussions, (vii) working with affect in the classroom.

Institute of Social Sciences, Bombay. Also see Maurya,M.R. (1962) Field work Training in Social Work. Indian Journal of Social Work. Vol 23(1) April; 9-14; Thangavelu,R. (1975). Field work Supervision: Its Place in Social Work Education. Indian Journal of Social Work. Vol. 35(4) Jan; 359-366; Kapoor,J.M (1961) The Role of Field work in modern social work education. Indian Journal of Social Work Vol.22 (2), p.113-120, September and Khinduka,S.K. (1963) The role of supervision in social work education. Indian Journal of Social Work, Vol.24(3), Oct; 169-180

142 Khinduka,S.K (1962) Group Supervision of social work students. Indian Journal of Social Work Vol.23 (1), p.105-114, April. Also see Mehta, V. D. (1975) Integrated Methods Approach- a Challenge Possibility in Field Work Instruction. Indian Journal of Social Work Vol.35 (4), 1975, p.335-34; Desai, M. M.(1975) Student Recording in Field Work Supervision . Indian Journal of Social Work, Vol.35 (4), p.345-352 and D'Souza,P (1978) Field Instruction In Social Work Education: a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of the Doctorate of Philosophy. Bombay: TISS.

143 ibid

In the Indian context, I have been part of a group drafting the objectives of critical field work training in Indian social work education. The aim here is to accommodate and work towards increasing the capacity of students to (i) develop skills and methodologies of working in partnership with communities, groups and individuals where there are differences in power in relation to caste, ethnicity, class, gender, age, ability and other differences in status, (ii) develop the ability to recognize and value the expertise/experience of individuals, families, groups and communities of Dalits, Tribes, Women, Aged and the Differently Abled, (iii) develop an awareness of structural processes of social exclusion, discrimination, social disadvantage, prejudices and differing forms of oppression, (iv) develop insights into the role of structure in constructing identities and self, and to identify and clarify one's own value premise in such contexts, (v) develop strategies that challenge oppression, discrimination, exclusion, disadvantage and other forms of inequality/injustice based on caste, ethnic, class, gender and ability, (vi) evidence in practice the ability to listen, respect and promote the views and needs of the oppressed within the context of engagement, either through social movements, social action, development organizations, service organizations or government departments and (vii) in the process of engagement, clarify one's role in/within the context as a change agent and strengthen commitment to the cause of the oppressed.

Within such a framework and directly in relation to the first year fieldwork supervision in a Masters in Social Work

programme I will engage in greater details of the process of supervision. While each of the semesters within the two year Master's programme of social work have their own content, thrust and concomitant pedagogical processes, I propose to perceive, identify and formulate such a learning trajectory as follows:

1. First Semester is identified as the Period of Unlearning,

2. Second Semester as the Period of Contextual Deepening,

B. First Semester Fieldwork Supervision

For students, the first semester is a period of extremely high expectations. Students bring a spirit of enquiry and a thirst to know that spans across a range of fields of enquiry and practice, from psychology to politics and even religion and philosophy. There is also an eagerness to know about fieldwork component. Once in fieldwork, they encounter problems of language, inability to make sense of theory vis-à-vis field context and the incongruity between field reality, practice and theory. Many students are pressured by the learning context to display intelligence, sensitivity and commitment.

First semester fieldwork is a challenge to the supervisor-supervisee circle, not only to clarify basic processes in social work training but to provide some direction to students while anchoring them in their engagement process. It is in such a context that the author would prefer

to identify the first semester as a period of critical field engagement aimed at ***unlearning***.

The Period of Unlearning: Processes in Supervision

I. Change in pedagogy

Most students take methodologies of learning for granted and make the mistake of using the same pedagogical method learnt during schooling and bachelor studies (graduation) to learn in the social work programme. While during schooling and graduation most teaching, especially in India, was didactic, fieldwork demands that students learn through experiential engagement. This needs to be stressed and awareness about learning other methods of learning be made conscious for the learner.

Introduction to linear and circular processes of observing and analysis, together with the ability to formulate both linear and circular questions are important. Students should also be introduced to the process of problematization of concepts, issues and situations. This would help them refine their questioning process. It is also necessary to assist students in the art of paraphrasing and reframing feelings, thought, behaviors and even issues/situations. This strengthens their ability to arrive, see and make meaning of their experience and the experiences of the people they work with. Most of the students in the first semester are in search of meaning and making meaning becomes fundamental to the fieldwork process.

Supervisory Content and Process

- Banking concept of education vs. Problem posing education/ critical learning
- Learning how to learn - Didactic Classroom Teaching vs. Experiential Field based learning: Subjecting banking concept of education to de-emphasis and highlighting different methodologies of learning.
- Introduction to the notion and theoretical frame of dialogue
- Role of Active Listening in dialogue
- Clarifying Linear Analysis
- Attempting a conscious Circular Analysis: Reflexive process
- Assisting students to formulate and ask questions
- Facilitating processes towards problematization and argument formulation
- Questioning the learnt method and process of learning
- The politics of 'meaning' : The art of Reframing and paraphrasing
- Introduce the process of unraveling what lies beyond problem focused analysis

II. Working towards a new value orientation in the Student

In India, a country such which is characterized by high degree of diversity, reality could present itself in very complex ways, especially when it comes to intersectionalities of caste, religion, ethnicity, language and gender. In India diversity is perceived as a strength and accepted as good in itself. But, it is not beyond one's imagination to perceive and comprehend that this perceived celebrated 'strength' has produced a system that has touched the nadir point when it comes to legitimized oppression. The product manifested in the form of the caste system, where such diversity, coupled with legitimized inequality has become, in its most diabolic sense- lethal.

It is extremely helpful while working on the issue of value orientation with students to encourage them to take positions in social work. Some students prefer not too as they see social work as an apolitical activity while others have proclivity to do so. In this regard the biggest challenge faced by the supervisor is in clarifying the line that separates the professional from the personal. I have come to regard the personal-professional dichotomy as only important in the initial phase of learning. The same holds no ground for structural workers. The earlier one can transcend this binary demarcation, the clearer the structure becomes and the more efficacious the practice in structure. However the capability to see things holistically takes time. It is a long drawn process which begins with the highly analytical act of 'essentializing' which entails the identification of key constitutive elements of a social

category, be it identity, context or sector, that one is engaging with in the field.

Other important issues that are existential in nature but of great value when it comes to clarifying the value base of students are conceptual engagement with categories such as responsibility, freedom, power, loneliness and guilt, posit in the form of questions to think and ponder about. It opens many doors for students in the process of learning. They experience these situations very frequently in the field.

Further, clarifying the understanding of concepts such as equality, justice, liberty, dignity, harmony, good, bad, beauty help strengthen the ethical and fundamental base of the students. It is also important to introduce through problematization certain foundational principles such as self determination, acceptance, non-judgmentality, etc in order to help students arrive at their own understanding and meanings about the same. Since most social work principles stems from 'beyond the binary', they are not easy to understand when viewed from a binary location. This engagement is purely theoretical and requires both reading and intellectual discussions.

Supervisory Content and Process

- Clarifying the personal-professional dichotomy in social work

- Problematising existential categories such as responsibility, freedom, guilt, loneliness, power and finiteness

- Working at the base of value construction by revisiting notions of fraternity, equality, justice, liberty, harmony, and dignity

- Introducing basic principles that guides engagement - problematising the notion of acceptance, non-judgmental attitude, controlled emotional involvement, purposeful expression of feelings, uniqueness of self, individualization, self determination and confidentiality

III. Praxis

Social work has often relied heavily on this learning technique made popular and refined by Paulo Freire. While there have been far more sophisticated techniques develop by Indian theoreticians themselves, like those of Siddhato Gotamo and Dr.B.R.ambedkar who focuses on body, sensation and history, yet there is a greater reference to Freire when one uses the word 'praxis'. With the publication of his celebrated book "Pedagogy of the Oppressed', the term praxis has become an integral technique and has definitively enriched social work training. For Freire, both supervisee and supervisor are 'learner-teacher' and 'teacher-learner' respectively. Both bring with them an ability to teach and to learn. In the process of action and reflection as an ongoing dynamic movement, (with an explicit acceptance that there can be 'no final action' or 'no final reflection), the supervisor and supervisee, deepens their understanding and knowledge of their own self and the world. Deeper insights into the process of action-reflection is unraveled cognitively as 'auto reflection' processes constituting of a forward movement

from 'thought-word-action' to 'action-word-thought' further leading to awareness, action and organization. In connection to the 'cultural circle' formulation of Freire, it is important to note that because both the supervisor and supervisee are said to have based their understanding on the basis of their own investigative reasoning through dialogue and not on imposition or blind acceptance of the word of either one, both the supervisor and supervisee gain deeper knowledge.

It is useful to also engage with the notion of 'observing' as a logical extension of the action-reflection process, although the same seems out of place in relation to the Freirian conception. Using 'cultural circle' and praxis as epistemological premises, it is useful to also demonstrate to supervisee the difference between linear and circular processes of questioning, although one would have preferred discussing 'logic' instead. Most students come with backgrounds that have no introduction to philosophy and the usage of logic formulation, be it inductive or deductive. This also helps them write different types of fieldwork recordings and clarifies the minute processes of recordings identified as being linear or circular. Linear in this context refers to the unraveling of reality premised on the question Why and circular, referring to questions of Where, When, What, How and Why.

Supervisory Content and Process

- Introducing the culture circle constituting of 'teacher-learner' and 'learner-teacher'

- Acting-reflecting-acting-reflecting as a process
- Auto reflection- from thought-word-action, to action-word-thought
- Awareness-organization-action
- Introducing the concept of Observing (acting-reflecting-observing) as a process
- Awareness-of-process and reflection-witnessing of self
- Linear questioning and circular questioning
- Capturing Linear, Curvi-linear and Circular field work recordings

IV. Deepening students understanding of structure and processes of oppression through critical thinking

Clarifying the boundary and minute differences between traditional social work theory, critical social work theory and those theoretical perspectives located in spaces beyond the binary as shown in Diagram 20 provides supervisee with an initial basic frame to learn to perceive how to read theory and where to locate oneself while in the process of analysis. It is essential to introduce to supervisee the notion of critical thinking expounded as being the capacity to understand a situation located in history, ability to collect reliant information, substantiate one's arguments, see and differentiate between right and wrong in a given situation and the capacity to make valid conclusions about a situation and one's position. Furthering this process, the supervisee should be introduced to the act of problematising. One

could pose questions such as: What is problematising? How does one go about the process of problematising? When are you problematising? Is critique, problematising? This is done not only to facilitate the supervisee's ability to identify limits of theoretical conception or identify the notional boundaries of a concept but to lead the supervisee to contest various 'received notions' and pre conceived notion (prejudices) that are taken as given.

Before acting in society, we need to have the ability to analyze society. As social workers we have too often been accused of being opinionated and having a flimsy, impressionistic understanding of social reality. Our ability of understanding the *social* in social work is at best mediocre. This is more so because we often simplify our very complex Indian reality by easily comprehensible and encompassing categories such as class, gender or religion. We often fall trap to the process of seeking to capture the essence of social reality in a single word only ending up in an unconscious over simplification and exclusion of other realities.

The concrete Indian condition is determined by complex factors such as geography, region, language, race, caste, class and gender. In such a context it is important that social work educators/supervisor have the capacity to understand the historical and regional context, identify and locate overarching realities (such as caste), identify the objects of inquiry, open up various lines of inquiry and engage the supervisee reflexively. As social work educators, we do not have the luxury of being naïve about society, and any act to the contrary is fueled by the obvious dangers of

abandoning the critical edge which our profession so demands.

For the Indian context while I refer heavily to Dr.B.R.Ambedkar's conception of historical oppression, religious social exclusion and violent domination, I have also found Marion Young's conceptualization of oppression very sophisticated. For many social work students in India, the ideas of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar are very hard to digest so to dilute the regid resistance Marion Young may be used. For Young (1992)[144] Oppression means not simply its traditional connotation of "the exercise of tyranny by a ruling group" but also its new left designation of the disadvantage and injustice some people suffer not because a tyrannical power intends to keep them down, but because of the everyday practices of a well-intentioned liberal society. It "refers to systemic and structural phenomena that are not necessarily the result of the intention of a tyrant but are in fact part of the basic fabrics of a society, not a function of a few people's choice or policies… Oppression refers to structural phenomena that immobilize or reduce a group…To be in a social group is to share with others a way of life that defines a person's identity and by which other people identify him or her". She identifies five faces/dimensions of Oppression: (i) Exploitation, (ii) Marginalization (iii) Powerlessness (iv) Cultural Imperialism and (v) Violence.

144 Young.I.M (1992). www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/young.pdf

Supervisory Content and Process

- Introducing and positing critical theory (conflict theory) against traditional theory (order theory)
- Introduction to the conception of critical thinking
- Clarifying ideological lenses: Problematising students preconceived conception of social reality
- Challenging and creating awareness about stereotypes and prejudices- deconstructing and deepening students' understanding of 'oppression'.

V. Introducing Social Work Methods

What are methods? What are the constitutive elements of a method? How does one arrive at a method? What is the difference between methodology and method? What is a premise? How does one identify an object of inquiry? How does one select a unit of analysis? What is intervention? Is there a way of intervening in a context? These and many more questions are critical in facilitating a supervisee's comprehension of a 'method' and to finally make meaning with the same. Not agreeing in totality with the school of thought that posits 'received methods' as core to Indian social work practice, I instead suggests engagement on 'methods' by clarifying ontological epistemological issues that are fundamental to arrive at a comprehensive formulation of a 'method'.

In India, to this day, the generally accepted systematized procedures or methods that are taught to students at the

MA level are identified as casework, group work, community organization, social action and social research together with social welfare administration. These are coupled with detailed descriptions of 'techniques' in the form of tools or instruments (questioning, clarification, information giving,…) used within a method and social work 'skills' in the form of an ability to use a systematized body of knowledge or procedure (casework, group work,…) effectively in intervention (recording, supervision, evaluation…). In my opinion, a 'method' should have an organic base rooted in the realities of its context.[145] Rather than introducing the concept of the 'method' directly, it is important that one begins with epistemic issues linked to structural realities rather than leap into didactic teaching of the well packaged bookish western definitions and content. Facilitating the formulation of a systematic and orderly procedure to evolve from analysis of the organic context opens up avenues for students to get insights into why a method is needed and therefore meaningful. I have detailed my understanding of the concept of method in chapter four.

The concept of 'change agent' is central to field work engagement, linked closely to the purposeful and conscious use of self while in field work. However, it is detrimental to hasten the process of imposing the 'change agent' notion on supervisee. No amount of theoretical explanation will help clarify the concept. It is the supervisee herself/himself

145 I had put down my thoughts in a paper bodhi.s.r (2011,a). "Critical Reflections on Approaches to Methods in Indian Social Work Education", in Jharkhand Journal of Development and Management Studies, Vol.9, No.4 (October-December, 2011)

who must slowly unravel its meaning in practice using the supervisor as a stable reflecting mirror. Within the same frame, one needs to also facilitate discussion on categories such as subjectivity, objectivity and reactive, responsive, reflexive (which I have noted in Diagram 19) even though any emphasis on the same is contradictory and antithetical to the process of dialogue and a dialogical relationship. The notion of empathy I believe also falls within the same realm.

Supervisory Content and Process

- Clarifying 'premise', 'objects of inquiry', 'unit of analysis', 'line of inquiry', 'methodology', 'method'
- Clarifying ontological epistemological premises and theories of perception- realist, idealist, intuitionist
- Introducing the 'change agent' concept
- The purposeful and conscious use of self
- The process of receptivity, subjectivity and objectivity in relation to self
- Introducing empathy as a process
- Relating basic social work principles to self within dynamic social reality
- Clarification of methods, techniques and skills emanating from context

VI. Introduction to the process of work- identification

In social work training one often encounters the problem of facilitating supervisee to be able to identify 'work' in the 'field'. Previously discussed was the 'social' in social work. But what is 'work' in social work? And what is 'field' in field work? Unfortunately these questions are greatly determined by the kind of field work 'agency' or system that the student is placed in. Pertaining to the former, work differs from one setting to the other.

The notion, nature and content of *work* vary between a government setting, non government setting and community setting. Within this framework, at a personal level, I would conceive that any act which emanates from a conscious and purposeful use of self directed towards ameliorative and structural change within a context could qualify as work. Further, because we perceive ourselves as a profession, these conscious acts formalized within the framework of 'professional service' are quantified by financial remuneration.

Connected to the concept of work, in-depth clarification about the notion of 'field' in field work becomes imperative. I have detailed this in chapter two. From within social work education in India, the 'field' has been viewed primarily from three perspectives: (i) generic, (ii) specialization and (iii) interdisciplinary concentrations or fields of practice. The first formulation perceives the 'field' as a generic 'context', simply understood as a demarcated space characterized by a dynamic confluence of time, place and person that is experienced in the here and now. This

conception of *field* is generally conceived by those schools of social work offering a generic M.S.W programme. The second formulation perceives the *field* as a context demarcated by/ into sectors (Medical and Psychiatric Social Work, Family and Child Welfare, Personnel Management and Industrial Relations, Urban and Rural Community Development). This kind of conception is witness among those schools offering a M.S.W programme with specializations.

The most recent formulation perceives the 'field' as a context (Community Organization and Development Practice, Children and Families) demarcated by sectors (Mental Health, Public Health, Criminology and Justice, Livelihood and Entrepreneurship) whose meaning, interpretation and experience depends greatly on socio-politico-historical locations and standpoint epistemic premises (Dalit Social Work, Tribal Social Work, Women Centered Practice). The M.A in Social Work programme offered by the Tata Institute of Social Sciences currently interwoven under the broad category of 'thematic programmes', formulates the 'field' in the form of interdisciplinary concentrations or 'fields/sites of practice' that circumscribes context, sectors and positionality around identities.

Over the course of a century, the Indian context has been characterized by myriad manifestations of a modern social life marred by increasing structural discrepancy. Such are the structural realities of the field, that sometimes even a contract with the State is positioned directly against community, especially poor communities. At times, when

one is struggling for the rights of the marginalized (which is *work* in social work), one is also paradoxically breaking the law or so it seems. However, theoretically informed action is something we cannot tease and run away from. It is useless to only take pride in remaining in opposition without making any dent on the structures that excludes and oppress. We must carry on the historical momentum towards change, clearly in a direction that liberates and emancipates the oppressed. In this connection we must be able to identify work (change) that demands process, and work (changes) that require immediate cause-effect action bearing immediate outcome.

Connected to the above it is helpful to dialogue with supervisee on positionality and the reality unraveling processes especially (as an initial technique) by positing the problem focus and strength focus dichotomy as understood and applied in social work practice. How does one's positionality change what we perceive and experience is a pertinent question to engage with.

Supervisory Content and Process

- Helping to identify *work*: structures and levels of work (self, agency, client/community, policy, system) and *fields* of practice

- The 'here and now' perspective and comprehending the change process. Change the only constant

- Process orientation and Cause-Effect orientation

- Positionality and the unraveling of social situations- Problem perspective and the strength perspective

The first semester is responsible for determining whether a student feels part of, or alienated from the two year social work programme. The role of the supervisor in this regard is critical. Students joining the social work programme bring with them a high degree of enthusiasm, a deep sense of concern, a commitment to learn and a willingness to engage. As supervisor I have often felt myself wanting on two counts. One, to provide a stable macro theoretical structure located within a critical anti hegemonic position that is organically located and contextually relevant to the Indian reality, and two, the ability to anchor them emotionally while at the same time opening my own self up to them in order to deepen our relationship in learning. The challenge is to accommodate their search and quest, to motivate them and at every possible juncture to model behavior that is at the same time critical yet accepting of their life experiences, whatever their caste, class, creed and gender. Starting from where they are rather than from where I am has always been the key for striking and consolidating the initial rapport developed, that in the process goes on to establishing a strong, reliable and trusting relationship premised on the spirit of dialogic enquiry. However, this also calls to question the role of supervisee. In several occasions I have unfortunately been simply unable to connect with them and at times felt utterly helpless. I find myself making analogies ranging from the intellectually sophisticated to the almost nonsensically mundane. I once stated to a supervisee whose interest

levels were far beyond my ability to connect, about a statement supposedly made by a Zen master, "It is great injustice not to dialogue with a student who is willing to learn, but it is an utter waste of time to even try to dialogue with one who is not yet ready to learn".

C. Second Semester Fieldwork Supervision

Key reflections on my experience of the second semester have led me to an understanding that the second semester as a whole is a period of intense conflict and confusion for students. Reasons such as a sense of incongruousness; feeling out of place vis-à-vis social work profession, mismatch between initial expectations and what the programme offers, a sense of being overwhelmed and helpless in relation to social reality and change, theoretically dry and intellectually non stimulating, difficulty in adapting to new situations and different pedagogical processes and an overall pressure to locate oneself within a large group of students from varied cultural backgrounds. There are personal issues as well, such as career choices; students wonder if they are cut out for the social work (referring to content being taught), family expectations, financial needs, having to make new friends and overall adapting to a new environment with different sets of rules, regulation, culture and lifestyles.

The second semester fieldwork is therefore a challenge to the supervisor-supervisee circle, not only to deepen understanding and make meaning but to also bring in new perspectives and an overall intellectually stimulating engagement. It is in such a context that the second

semester can be identified as a period of critical theoretical engagement aimed at **contextual deepening**.

The Period of Contextual Deepening: Processes in Supervision

I. Philosophy, Methodology and Method

I have often felt myself cornered by friends from the discipline of philosophy on questions relating to the epistemic premise of social work methods. Do we locate our methods on an empiricist episteme or constructivist episteme, or are we 'eclectic', if such a foundation is epistemologically permissible. For those among us who comes from a navayana framework it is much easier to engage students around premise that are frame around binary principles and 'beyond the binary' principles. What is the premise of a method such as Casework, Group work, Community Organization or Social Action. Methods cannot exist without an epistemic base and any act that negates the same is to fall trap to a conservative project that negates theory in order to promote the status quo principle. Also important within this debate are the questions of ontological positioning that concerns categories or categorization that captures and represents the identity of those we work with, within the context of action and reflection. This demands that we take a good look at our social reality and concomitant notions that subsumes it, for our final engagement is with such a reality, not outside of it. Our methods are an organic product of our reality. In our hurry to 'do' we have actually borrowed formulations that are incongruous to our reality and

problems. The tag of being a profession that has stayed afloat and survived depending on 'received theories' is a truth we cannot deny. While engaging in the 'dialogue circle' (supervisee-supervisor circle) I have felt it important to engage on ontological and epistemological issues. This helps clarify many 'vague' and even invisible areas in social work especially related to the organic reality and its relationship with perspectives and methods.

Following this, another core content that needs to be expounded concerns schools of thoughts in social work or various ideological positions as presented in Diagram 20. Based on these perspectives deeper discussion with supervisee on various perspectives prevailing in Indian Social Work helps clarify ideological locations without being theoretically parochial. The aim is to generate awareness about every single position rather than try convincing supervisee about the superiority one single position. However, an anti oppressive epistemological standpoint steadies the process of theoretical unraveling within the 'dialogue circle'.

Supervisory Content and Process

- Introduction to the philosophy of critical social work methodology: the ontology-epistemology-axiology axis (category-method-value)

- Social reality as an outflow of the self (idealist) versus existing social reality independent of self (realist) - the realist and anti-realist perception debate

- Practical engagement with and through systems, structures, communities, groups and individuals

- Reframing, practicing and refining ones purposeful interaction in structural work, working through community, working through groups and working with individuals

- The applications of social work research and process oriented organizing / social work administration

- Introducing Schools of thought in Indian Social Work- clarifying and locating dialogue within varied ideological position.

II. Society and Self - Restructuring and Reorganizing Organic Structures

The dialogue circle which constitutes of the supervisor-supervisee relationship is a safe boundary where restructuring and reorganizing of organic structures can take place. With social reality and society as the standpoint and the self as a mirror of that reality, one could bring congruency and symmetry between belief structures within self and structures operating in the outside reality. There is often great resistance to this process; however, reflecting on social work's vision and mission is imperative. We are a pro poor people-centered profession whose singular mission is to struggle for the oppressed, with the oppressed and through the oppressed by promoting and protecting their dignity, rights and liberty in the forward movement towards achieving social justice and equality. To me there is no

social work outside this frame. Any subversion, diversion or revision of the profession's vision and mission is an act of hypocrisy and betrayal of the ideals of the profession. We are against caste, against patriarchy, against the dominance of one class by the other, against exclusion of disabled, against the discrimination of children, aged, minorities, sexualities., etc. Every single thought, word and deed of a social worker must be measured by its ability to achieve justice, equality and freedom for the socially excluded and oppressed. The emergence of the new farmes of anaylysis in social work as presented in Diagram 20 has given the profession a wide framework to analyse and clarify both our politics and our change agent role.

Another very important factor in the dialogue circle of supervisor/supervisee that should never be compromised is the reading, comprehending and understanding of the Constitution of India. Detail discussion of the same is essential.

Supervisory Content and Process

- Strengthening and deepening restructured perspective positions

- Challenging, confronting and restructuring oppressive social structures such as caste, patriarchy, class, age, ableism, sexism within the cultural circle

- The importance of critical analysis, linear and atomistic thinking and the possibility of circular and inter-relational thinking

- Clarifying the political domain and structures of power in society: The Indian Constitution and its frame

III. Clarifying Methodologies of Methods (skills)

Clarification of methodology in method formulation permits the problematization of what we sometimes take for granted 'as given'. There is a need to look at the various facets and premises of a method in totality (i.e., together as a related set) even after the same is formulated. How is each method related to the other when conceive holistically? What is the relation between casework, groupwork, community organization and social action, etc?

In chapter four I have identified the various ways to see the method formulation process under various heads. The first way of seeing is located around the identification of clear lines of demarcation between one method and the other in definition that are somewhat placed in different permutations and combinations depending on the unit of intervention, with an inherent belief that one single method can do without the others at any given point in time. In the second ways of seeing the methods are located horizontally in a spectrum next to each other within a specified context responding to situations as it presents. The third ways of seeing is where community becomes the context and community organization becomes the primary method, subsuming other methods like casework, group work, etc., within its framework. The fourth way of seeing is where intervention are formulated as context so demands rather than giving precedence to pre formulated method to

respond to context.[146] To bring symmetry between these ways of approaching methods is the challenge for educators but imperative for the learning process.

Further in this context, discussion about various aspects related to the thinking (cognitive) process, doing (action) process and being (here and now) is important. How one builds each of these aspects and the demands thereof to deepen and strengthen 'knowing' allows supervisee-supervisor a less bumpy movement towards clarifying social work's key element- the purposeful and conscious use of self in relationship. This is a time consuming process. However, even a short excursion to this domain of engagement as an introductory process is helpful. The same should be strengthened in the second year of training.

I have also found it extremely useful to introduce to students the concept of social work skills as detailed in Diagram 21. Over the years I have actually begun teaching this framework as the introductory framework to field engagement. Students begins to expand their ways of looking encapsulating a larger reality beyond themselves and changing their perspective on practice. The component on understanding social work approaches to field engagement has also been very meaningful to students.

146 I have also reflected on these processes in another article. bodhi.s.r (2011). "Critical Reflections on Approaches to Methods in Indian Social Work Education", in Jharkhand Journal of Development and Management Studies, Vol.9, No.4 (October-December, 2011)

Supervisory Content and Process

- From clarifying the methodological foundations of social work methods to identification of the methods perspective
- Identification of varied perspectives or points-of-view within methods as detailed in chapter four
- The skill based approach through as detailed in Diagram 21
- Identifying specific skills in relation to context, issues in communities, structures and systems and giving students field based assignments like conducting a small sample size research, write a project proposal, etc,.
- Identifying techniques and formulation of strategies
- Understanding various social work approaches used in the field
- Delineating between Thinking, Doing and Being
- The Purposeful and conscious use of self in relationships

IV. Attitudinal Change

Student social workers are new agents of change. The program envisions them as agents of change rather than as agents of control. How social work students perceive themselves currently and how they perceive themselves in the future depends on how clear they are about the concept

of 'change agent'. The 'change agent' concept is a processual realization and it is in the process of becoming, that clarity is arrived at. As a notion, it is theoretically attractive but also painfully elusive. It is because of this that we must have tremendous patience while building a forward momentum towards arriving at the 'change agent' in ourselves and in our trainees. At the core of the change agent lies the unraveling of both ethics and aesthetics. While the same must be taken into the second year of field training, introduction of the concept in the first year begins the deepening of self in the said realm.

In conclusion to first year fieldwork it is important to not lose sight, stay awake and even remind ourselves at every point in time, (so that we do not blind ourselves by pressures of the multi faceted, multiple task demanded from us), to the single fact that what finally drives any process in critical social work is a personal conviction and commitment to the cause of the oppressed, without which we have no reason to exist. In the context of personal goals, value orientation of personal conviction and commitment to pro-poor perspectives is important.

Supervisory Content and Process

- The use of self as an 'agent of change'
- The ability of self to determine change- its course, dynamic outcome and process
- Focus on process while not undermining input - output oriented work - Holistic learning vs. Tasked centered learning

- In the context of personal goals - value orientation in the context of personal conviction and commitment to pro-poor perspectives

- Introduction to the concept of aesthetics and ethics

Conclusion

The supervisor-supervisee engagement in social work training is an essential educational activity. The gains from the relationship are for both supervisee and supervisor. Students joining the social work programme bring with them a tremendous sense of commitment and a will to learn. The role of the supervisor is to tap this potential in students and to engage with them towards deepening their understanding of complex Indian reality while strengthening their commitment towards working for structural change.

Supervision has always been an experience that is both emotionally and intellectually exhilarating. At the culmination of one year of critical fieldwork training, supervisees should be able at threshold level, to understand how to make use of existing and potential networks to challenge and confront discrimination and social exclusion based on caste, class, gender, religion, ability and tribe. They should be able to comprehend and understand the importance and impact that personal values, principles and ideological lenses can have on practice. They should also be able to identify skill sets required to work within and with organizations, together with the balance of influence, power and resources of organizations - while working with

and through people. It is also important to deepen their understanding and apply and observe the use of various methods of challenging through practice, discrimination, exclusion and social disadvantage. Finally they should be able to apply theoretical knowledge of social justice to practice with discriminated identities and groups which include dalits, tribes, women, poor, children, elderly, differently-able and religious minorities.

Within the current Indian context, the need for a structurally conscious training in social work education is imperative. For social work education in India to become efficacious, it needs to reposition its perspective and theoretical base, and incorporate methodologies that are congruent to the Indian reality. The formulation must however accept a great degree of social diversity and complex political heterogeneity that the Indian reality presents.

Fieldwork supervision in such a context is a challenging task. It should stay theoretically abreast and in symmetry with the latest theoretical formulations in other disciplines within the sciences, social sciences and humanities and have the inert capability to reposition critical content within the boundaries of dynamic political economic processes and macro structural change.

Chapter VIII

Upekkha Reflections on an Interview in Retrospect

A Discipline that silences its rebels has gained its peace. But it has lost its future:A:nonymous

Over the years I have given a number of interviews on curriculum development related to Dalit and Tribal Social Work (DTSW). In some of the interviews I tried to clarify the history and evolution of DTSW and in another I shared the basic theoretical framework of DTSW. There is also one interview that I gave to an international social work magazine from Finland where I tried to explain the Dalit and Tribal realities in India and the social work response to the same.

Since its inception in early 2003, the idea of DTSW has developed further, both in theory and practice, nonetheless as on 2019 the idea remains confined to a few educators and institutes. The issues of tribes and of dalits especially, create subtle tremors among social work educators because of the historio-philosophical nature of its theoretical content and the politico-historical positionality of its perspective. Right up till 2019, not many social work educators and social work institutes were willing to openly engage with the DTSW.

I remember in 2003 when the then Director of the TISS – R.R.Singh opened the forum for an open discussion and debate about social work education and the need to 'think

out of the box', the issues about Dalits and Tribes was an extremely difficult issue to even mentioned. After S.Parasuraman became Director and the restructuring of the TISS was taken up in right earnest, some of us from the Dalit and Tribal communities made an open request to him that the issues of Dalits and Tribes must be mainstreamed and brought to the center of the TISS curriculum. There was a collective agreement among many colleagues, even outside the ST/ST communities who shared the same sentiment. Based on this collective wisdom and assertion the DTSW was born.

Since 2006 when it became a programme in TISS, many processes have taken place that could be documented for history's sake, plus for the theoretical value it upholds for social work education. But I have not been able to document all these processes. However two key interventions I wish to state that are fundamental to the carving out of the DTSW, first as a domain of study and secondly as a field of practice.

In 2012, together with my colleagues, we launched the Indian Journal of Dalit and Tribal Social Work. Then in 2013 we launched another journal in the name of the programme offered in TISS called the Indian Journal of Dalit and Tribal Studies and Action. Both these journals, which are owned by a academic group - the Tribal Intellectual Collective India, have survived to this day. Most of the articles in the journals are contributed by colleagues, alumni and practitioners in the field of Dalit and Tribal empowerment. The experience of running a journal is another interesting story to tell, but I will leave it for

another time. Suffice to say that the introduction of these journals was a major boost to the programme since it provided not only a theoretical base but also brought in many more educators and practitioners to deepen and enrich the thinking process further.

In the light of the same, I thought it judicious for me to include in this book one such text, an interview that I gave in the year 2012 to Mr.Nilesh Kumar Thool who was a DTSW alumnus. The interview concerned mainly the history and evolution of Dalit and Tribal Social Work as an idea. This interview was published in the Indian Journal of Dalit and Tribal Social Work in its December 2012 issue. Although in retrospect there would have been many more insights and interventions that I can now provide, I have left the text as it is with a few minor corrections. Research scholars and my students will find the interview enriching, as it gives them a peep into the thinking process that went into the development of DTSW.

The 2012 interview was as follows:

Q (Question). You were the coordinator of Dalit and Tribal Social Work (DTSW) since 2006 and one of the key people who helped facilitate the programme content of the Masters in Dalit and Tribal Studies and Action. Tell us about the DTSW course content followed by the course content of the M.A. in Dalit and Tribal Studies and Action?

Ans (Answer). DTSW, anchored by the Centre for Social Justice and Governance in the School of Social Work, started as a concentration in Social Work in 2006. It initially comprised of six courses and ten weeks of fieldwork spread

over two semesters in the second year of the M.A. Social Work programme. Till 2012 DTSW constituted of seven courses, i.e., Dalit and Tribal Social Work – Issues and Perspectives; Political Economy of Dalit Development; Political Sociology of Tribes; Advanced Practice Skills in Dalit and Tribal Development; Innovative Intervention in Dalit and Tribal Empowerment; Rural, Rurality, Caste and Tribe (added in 2009) and a Seminar Paper in Dalit and Tribal Issues.

A concentration was optional i.e., students were allowed to choose a concentration at the end of the first year. We saw a steady growth of students opting for DTSW over the past six years. In the first year we had 18 students out of the total student strength of 119. In the following year we had 21 students, then 26/126, 19/119, 35/140, 36/162 and, in 2012 we have 37 students out of total student strength of 168 and three international students.

The last time I gave an interview on a similar topic I mentioned that plans were afoot to begin an M.A. in Dalit and Tribal Studies and Action. Now, the idea has come alive and the course has begun with the admission of 25 students. Dalit and Tribal Studies and Action is an intense, theoretically engaging academic programme premised within a Dalit and Tribal Episteme. It is located within Anti Oppressive Social Work and articulates bottom up, indigenous perspectives under the rubric of Dalit and Tribal Social Work. The programme follows a meta-discipline approach to knowledge acquisition and brings within its theoretical ambit subjects such as Ontology, Epistemology, Ethics and Aesthetics, Social and Political

Philosophy and Dalit and Tribal Science. The course begins with an experiential engagement with Dalit and Tribal epistemology coupled with an added seven day stay in Indian villages. We have a total of 13 courses totaling 26 credits, plus 6 credits for research and 24 credits for fieldwork out of a total 78 credit Masters programme. The courses we offer are (1) Rural, Rurality, Caste and Tribes, (2) Political Theory for Critical Social Work (3) Term paper on Dalit and Tribal Studies (4) Dalit and Tribal Social Work: Perspective and Concepts (5) Political Economy, development and Dalits (6) Caste, State and Politics in South Asia (7) Tribe, State and Governance (8) International Social Work and Indigenous People (9) Advanced Dalit and Tribal Social Work Practice Skills (10) Law, Justice and Democratic Rights (11) Tribal and Dalit Movements: Theory and Practice (12) Social Policy, Government and Governance (13) Social Entrepreneurship among Dalits and Tribes. An extra course on Project Planning and Management is also offered.

Q. Tell us about the origins of DTSW – about the social analysis that went into conceptualizing such a concentration within the discipline of Social Work. Also elucidate as to why the categories 'dalit' and 'tribe' have been used in this conceptualization.

Ans : It was during the restructuring of the Social Work programme at TISS in the year 2005 that DTSW came about. While trying to match the external reality with our internal programmes we found that one of the most persistent factors that kept on recurring and defining the external environment of our reality, which is Dalits and Tribes, was constantly missing in our internal curriculum

content. It was as though caste and tribe (especially caste) was an invisible reality in social work education; and seemed to have warranted no response from social work education for 70 years. On this count, most of us who were working on issues related to Dalits and Tribes argued for a more comprehensive response to these realities.

From then on we worked on the rationale of the concentration. In the context of caste, it was easy to formulate as there were already writings on the subject. On anti-caste social work, the first theoretical formulation in social work education, positioned within such an episteme was articulated by A.Ramaiah (1998) in his article The Plight of Dalits: A Challenge to Social Work Profession. Professor Ramaiah castigated Indian professional Social Work for ignoring caste and argued that most professional social workers were caste-blind and inherently caste prejudiced. He suggested that the first thing that professional social workers need to seriously consider doing is to de-caste themselves. He went on to state that no social work practice paradigm could contribute meaningfully and make any real dent on the marginalized till the same is first accomplished. We have formulated Anti-Caste social work which is the epistemological premise of Dalit Social Work, and have positioned the same as a theoretical position that challenges the structure of graded inequality, based on purity and pollution (that is closely linked to caste and descent) and proposed a social work practice (both perspective and theory-practice) that challenges the system that dehumanizes people.

Having stated the same, let me clarify why the category 'Dalit' was used. Am aware of other categories such as mulnivasi for instance, but we thought it judicious to stay with the Dalit category. On this debate I will refer to Gopal Guru. I think Gopal Guru's article Understanding the category Dalit gave us an incisive and comprehensive analysis of the category. Let me quote Guru – he argues that in contemporary Dalit Politics, the category of 'Dalit' has become a part of the national and global, political as well as academic agenda and has found articulation across different socio-cultural situations. The category Dalit was used by no less a person than Dr. Ambedkar himself in his fortnightly publication Bahishkrut Bharat. The term Dalit was defined by him in a comprehensive way. He says, "Dalithood is a kind of life condition that characterizes the exploitation, suppression and marginalization of Dalit people by the social, economic, cultural and political domination of the castes' Brahmanical ideology". While addressing his own social constituency he used the term 'Pad Dalit' meaning those who are crushed under the feet of the Hindu system. Further, Guru argues that the category Dalit is not a metaphysical construction, but derives its epistemic and political strength through the material social experience. This social construction of Dalithood makes itself more authentic and dynamic rather passive or rigid. The category Dalit takes ideological assistance from Buddha, Phule, Marx and Ambedkar and in the process becomes man centred rather than God centred; as the Gandhian connotation of 'Harijan' does. The category Dalit, in fact; promotes both the cognitive and

emotional response of the collective subjects to the immediate life world and its reconstruction.

Coming back to the formulation of Anti Caste Social Work, there are examples of similar formulations across the world especially from the United Kingdom and Canada against domineering discriminating systems. I think the most widely acknowledged is Anti Racist Social Work by Lena Dominelli, (1994). She defines anti-racist practice as focusing on "transforming the unequal social relations shaping social interaction between black and white people into egalitarian ones". Dominelli insists that change must happen at both personal and institutional levels and that "individual conduct in inter-personal relations and the allocation of power and resources in society have got to be transformed if racism is to be eliminated". Other examples of the same are Feminist Social Work, Black Social Work, etc.

With regards to the formulation of Tribal Social Work, although there has been a long history of the profession's response to the plight of tribes, especially from Gandhians, our formulation took into consideration the current situation of Tribal peoples in the country. All of us know that the indigenous and tribal people/communities are encountered with an insurmountable crisis, hardly ever witnessed before. The problem in tribal areas today is grave. We are witness to an outright violent confrontation in some geographical pockets, while in some areas there are mass movements led either by tribes themselves or by political formations of various ideological shades with the tribal question at its core. While some of the contestations

are positioned against the State, others are resistance movements aiming to protect and preserve tribal communities. On one hand, there are forces of assimilation, mainstreaming or co-option, operating on them at a rapid and massive scale. On the other hand is the massive deployment of state forces to facilitate their 'willing acceptance' of the indomitable 'nation state' – premised in a frame of integration, inclusion or affiliation which is coupled with an understated and hidden neo-liberal agenda, compelling them to operate within the Nation State's bounded, autonomous and rigid political boundaries. Squeezed between these determined alternating resolute forces, closing in from all ends, are the varied 700 recognized 'Scheduled Tribes', who have responded differently to each of these forces, operating individually and in combination. While some of their responses have been within the realm of the socio-religious and socio-cultural, some have been within the socio-political and politico-economic domain. Interestingly, central to the formulation and articulation of these organic tribal resistances, is the overt, yet subtle, pulsating endogenous need to differentiate them from the 'other' and to protect and preserve their critical geopolitical and social spaces, with respect to their territory, culture and politics.

Our formulation also took into consideration processes and debates generated by the National Tribal Policy. In 2005 (the period of restructuring at TISS), debates surrounding the Draft Policy document of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs were very much alive. A number of discussions were held at TISS on the said subject. For a long time tribes was

either seen as backward or isolated groups that needed to be assimilated into the 'mainstream'. We formulated Tribe Centered Social Work as an organic process of working 'with' and 'through' tribes, which accept the relevance and efficacy of endogenous methodologies as having the capability to explain, protect and promote tribes. The first comprehensive article arguing for the same was Interface between State, Voluntary Organizations and Tribes: A Perspective towards Tribe-Centered Social Work Practice published by Akhup (2009). Currently we have moved from Tribe Centered Social Work to Tribal Social Work. Tribe Centered connotes a notion of tribe being a target group locked in a hierarchy with those who wish to intervene. There is an element of paternalism embedded in the formulation. Tribal Social Work on the other hand refers to Tribes as an epistemological community. The notion of epistemological community is premised on community rather than individuals and argues that community is both, the generator and repository of knowledge. Theorization includes lived and shared experience, observations and reflections – leading to generalization and application that stay close to the narratives of tribal people.

Q. But why did you use the category tribe specifically rather than Adivasi?

Ans : 'Tribe' is still a useful and powerful category to engage with reality. Over time, while some categories often flatten, become stale and lose much of their representative ability and analytic rigor, some categories go through an increase in their heuristic value and overall usage. The value of a category, in this case, tribe, is greatly determined by

perpetual critical contestations of varied perspectives; allowing for new ways of seeing, meaning and interpretation. In this context, however pejorative the term tribe may have been, it still explains a history and sociology of many very different societies in our country. Its political usage is still in vogue in the Indian context.

The meaning of the category 'tribe' has come a long way since the British colonial conception that generally meant backward and uncivilized in an upward historical scale of culturo-economic development. A tribe, in those days, referred to a simple, illiterate and backward community who will in time, as change takes place, become more complex and advanced, thereby losing its tribal-ness. Enactment of the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation Act and the Scheduled Areas Act (1873-74) pertained to special instruments to govern such societies. By 1919 conceptions such as 'backward tracts' and 'unadministered areas' were articulated. All these referred to tribes inhabiting such geographies in a manner as articulated above. G.S. Ghurye and Verrier Elwin who were locked in fierce debate on the tribal question from the 1940s to the 60s perceived tribes as either Backward Hindus or as 'special communities to be isolated' and later as a Kshatriya caste respectively. Well known academics in Tribal studies, S.C. Roy and N.K. Bose, identified tribes more in terms of cultural markers and thereby locking tribe as a culturo historical category. D. N. Majumdar in 1958 argued for a 'tribe in transition' sort of conception (later challenged by Andre Beteille in 1986). During the 1950s, we had at one end the Nehruvian conception as articulated in his Panchsheel for Tribal

development – celebrating the concept of 'own genius', 'rights to land and forest', 'endogenous development with minimal outside interference', 'no over-administration and development in consonance with tribal social and cultural institutions', and 'stress on human character rather than statistical results'. On the other hand, (beginning with) Census 1931, followed by the Kalelkar Commission 1955, Lokur Committee 1965 and Chanda Committee 1969, identified markers such as primitiveness and backwardness, distinctive culture, geographical isolation and having shyness of contact with communities at large, as the defining criteria for 'tribe'. This was the general understanding prevailing during those times. Whatever be the conception, one cannot but see an element of paternalism embedded in the same. The voice of the people coming from tribal communities was fragmented. While Jaipal Singh Munda preferred the category Adivasi, others like Nichols-Roy were okay with the category 'tribe'. Babasaheb Dr.B.R.Ambedkar who initially used the term 'aborigines' was caught in the middle of this categorical battle with Jaipal Singh, having first to find a category that was acceptable to all communities that were to be recognized constitutionally and thus 'scheduled', while at the same time having to manage the venom being spewed by dominant upper caste groups, against these 'to be scheduled communities' by individuals who disliked him personally and were dead against his attempts to establish and insert strict protective mechanism for such communities. Interestingly, in the late 1960s, the movements emerging from the ultra left did give a very interesting theoretical twist to the category 'tribe'. But let

me go there a little later. Beginning from the 1970s, the category 'tribe' has exploded in terms of what it means and refers to. We read K. S. Singh who studied tribal movements and referred to tribes as an ethnic group engaging in ethnicity – using their identity to mobilize themselves within a particular context to usher betterment and change for themselves. Singh did not differ too much from Majumdar's conception of 'tribe in transition' but brought in the element of ethnicity and distinctiveness forcefully – which in my opinion has done great service to the understanding of tribes. There are many more sociologists and anthropologists, like S. C. Dube and L .P. Vidyarthi who have contributed immensely to the tribal debate. Another important person in Tribal studies is Jagannath Pathy. Pathy initially referred to tribes as an ethnic minority in his 1988 book Ethnic Minorities in the Process of Development, this created a furor, and later conceived 'tribes' as an identity located within political economy. For Pathy, tribes were subjects of history with their own political space and cognitive specificity. He defined them as historically evolved societies, biologically self-perpetuating with common cultural features, subordinated in several ways to dominant society and for long, engaged in struggles to preserve and promote their distinguishable features as well as territorial survival resources. Other people from the Left, like A. B. Bardhan and Archana Prasad have also written interesting pieces on the tribal question. I still remember Bardhan's 1973 definition of tribes as being a single, endogenous socio-political entity with a cultural and psychological make-up of a community at a definite historical stage of development.

In 1986, Andre Beteille challenging Majumdar's 'tribe in transition' formulation, articulated 'tribe' as a historical necessity locked in a hierarchical accident with caste based civilization within a coexistence framework. This conception is referred time and again among us in Tribal Studies, more so because of an interesting approach that Beteille argued for. He called it the historical approach, which in his words emphasized 'coexistence' as compared to earlier writing that were condemned to an evolutionary approach which emphasized 'succession'. Then there are sociological and anthropological stalwarts such as T. K. Oomen and B. K. Roy Burman arguing for tribes as 'nation and nationalities'. All of these conceptions held sway till the writings of Virginius Xaxa emerged. In the post Xaxa phase within tribal studies, by 'tribe' we mean not only a socio cultural entity existing in time and space but a culturo political entity perceived vertically, and a politico historical entity located horizontally in time and space. As much as tribe is a socio cultural entity, it is also a political unit, a nation, in and by itself. It is neither a caste, nor a peasant group and neither is it a stratified grouping which in due course of time will lose its sense of nationhood in the sea of greater traditions. However, for the Indian state, 'tribe' still remains only a politico administrative category. Dr. B. D. Sharma gave us interesting insights into this kind of a conception in his book Tribal Affairs in India: the Crucial Transition. There are very many more interesting debates but not much has changed.

In my opinion things will not remain so simple anymore with the appropriation of the tribal category by the ultra left

forces in the country. I have observed a radicalization of the tribal category to such an extent that it would be difficult for the state not to take note of. There is a very interesting intersection between the semi colonial, semi feudal conception of the nature of the India state by ultra leftist groups and the organic process of tribal resistance against the 'other', in various regions that tribal inhabit. It is on this politico-historical intersection, that the ultra left and the tribes seem to meet vis-à-vis the Indian state. It is sad for the tribes as they are being taken for a ride by the ultra left and I am of the opinion that the ultra left is riding piggy back on the tribes on this count. Their basic agenda is to overthrow the state and to probably replace the same by a so called 'egalitarian communist structure'. For us tribes, all we want is a state that is humane enough to respect our claims to our lands, waters and forests and treat us with dignity and respect. With the exception of a few tribal movements, most of our struggles are only to humanize the state and to make it listen to our pleas. To make it pay heed to our historical right, nothing more than that. You know, from my own experience I do not think that most tribal communities envisaged their politics as wanting to move out of 'India'. They are a few who undeniably demand for a separate nation, but their demands have to be understood in the right historical context and perspective. Many tribes, even those in the North East, have seen the plight and treatment of similar groups in neighboring countries like Bangladesh, Myanmar and China. I do not think any tribal community with the exception of a few would want to venture out of the confines of the Indian State. Even tribes in Chottanagpur, and I have spoken to a number of friends

and activists on this issue. Am not wrong to assert that all they are asking for are basic rights to land, water and forests and dignified treatment and respect for their life and culture by the state. I do not think that is too much to ask for considering the history of our indigenous existence and how we came to be part of the Indian state. It is historical injustice done to the tribes if such an analysis is not taken into consideration. Some of us wonder why this very state that promised us constitutional safeguards to be part of it right from the days of independence, is unleashing such brutalities – not even considering us human enough to seek our consent on matters pertaining to our lives. I mean, ok, we are locked and accepted within a very different notion of citizenship in the country as there are a number of protective, promotive and preservative mechanisms guaranteed to us within the frame of the constitution and we are different to other citizens on that count. Now does that make us lesser human? And if the case is that you perceive us so, then at least don't rob us of our humanity so totally that we are bereft of anything that we have considered dear for generations such as our relationship to land, water and the forest. With every passing day it is becoming more complex especially with the role that capitalist forces are playing. While we are willing to partake in the game of capital, some neoliberal forces are simply disrespectful and antithetical to our worldview and lifeworld. But yes, am aware of the basic historical facts about capital. Capital does not know or care for tribal values neither does it care for any rules. The situation is complex, but whatever be the case, tribes are as much Indians as anyone else and peace loving loyal citizens too.

We need the state to listen to us and to side with us on matters related to our lives as enshrined and promised to us in the constitution of the country.

Let me turn back to social work education. For us the purpose of a category is not only to define a context precisely, but also to facilitate the drawing of clear boundaries that would allow an abstract delineation for informed action and reflection. It is within such a framework that we have used the category tribe and not any other category although i must say that my colleagues and I are deeply embedded and connected to the adivasi category.

Across the world the emergence of a similar frame known as Aboriginal Social Work is widely acknowledged. Individuals like McKenzie and Morrissette (1983) as cited in Campbell, C. (2003) contend that an "Aboriginal (Social Work) framework of practice rests on four key principles: The recognition of a distinct Aboriginal world view; the development of Aboriginal consciousness about the impact of colonialism; cultural knowledge and traditions as an active component of retaining Aboriginal identity and collective consciousness; and empowerment as a method of practice". They also distinguish between culturally sensitive and culturally appropriate practice stating that "while culturally sensitive service advances awareness of issues in the Aboriginal community in the context of involvement with an ethnic minority, culturally appropriate service integrates core Aboriginal values, beliefs, and healing practices in program delivery".

Q. How does DTSW conceive social work education and practice?

Ans : For us DTSW is a perspective, a way of doing, an analytical framework, a 'method', an attitude and an approach with a tightly knit sense of ethical values, morality and responsibility to the most oppressed communities of our country. Ours is a programme that has come about from an in-depth analysis and understanding of the overarching and defining Indian reality and the demands that the historically oppressed peoples have made on our profession. Contemporary social work practice needs immediate reformulation. The old traditional school does not seem to have the capability for a truthful introspection into the problems that plague the profession or even the courage to face the truth about this country. As a profession we have brushed aside issues that need to be confronted and challenged. A friend of mine told me about a poet from Andhra Pradesh who wrote an amazing line. The poet stated "we are the soldiers but we are the battlefield too". The biggest struggle that should be waged by Indian social workers is the battle against ourselves, against our elitist nature and attitude, our insensitivity to historically oppressed groups, our weakness in analyzing and comprehending structural problems, our own personal location in structure, our over- reliance on received theory from Europe and North America, our total lack of organic attachment to our own reality, our inability to formulate efficacious response to systemic and structural oppression etc. The battle is directed at us, we are the biggest battlefield.

Now, going back to the first part of your question, a quick scan of social work programmes and content across India shows that there exists a great degree of variation in courses that are offered. Some of the programmes rely heavily on teaching 'methods' while some thrust their content on contextual analysis. Certain Social Work schools like TISS still teach Methods in the way it was taught in the 1950s and 1960s; Casework, Groupwork, Community Organization, etc. To DTSW these old ways of formulating Methods are not only outdated but irrelevant. Methods are not only a comprehensive skill set contained in the same, understood as a way of doing, but also a way of seeing (perspective) and a way of analyzing context (contextual). I have dwelt on the subject at length in an article on approaches to methods published in the Jharkhand Journal of Development and Management, XISS, Ranchi and also in an interview I gave to Ms. Sruthi Herbert published in Acumen, Marian Journal of Social Work. In short I argued for a contextual approach which presupposes the probability of the existence of 'Methods' but it is not imperative to identify them since Methods are not absolutes and only come into play in a certain context. In this formulation, it was argued that the context takes precedence over 'a single procedure or way of doing something in a regular, systematic and orderly planned manner'. This approach lends itself to a conceptualization that one could view the context from any 'way of seeing' and 'doing' while proceeding towards analyzing, defining fields of practice & practice skills. Analysis takes precedence over doing as one has first to arrive at a thorough understanding of the contextual reality before

acting in reality. Many educators professing this view are critical of the concept of identifying compact methodologies in social work. They believe that 'methods' are water tight compartments and rigid theorization of processes that are false conceptualizations of an ever changing dynamic social reality. Such a classification (individual, groups, community), these educators believe, does not really exist because, they argue, that 'everything is' and 'everything is not' at every moment. These educators argue that it is only the contextual reality that should define the intervention. They cite experiential evidence to substantiate their position arguing that the moment one approaches an issue from a Method standpoint; the context tends to get overshadowed by the Method and in the process, the context is unconsciously nudged to the background, recedes and fades into oblivion only to reassert back when intervention is not producing the desired outcome. Time and again I have heard educators within this viewpoint arguing that social work needs to transcend Methods. This, they argue, is in order not to get lost in a 'world of Methods' trying to formulate and make sense about a preconceived and pre-formulated 'doing' even before comprehending theoretically an ever changing radically unpredictable and untidy reality. Methods more than anything else, hinder the process of intervention, as they play middlemen between the social worker and context. I believe that there is a need to move beyond the methods approach and plunge directly into social reality through the identification of a context skill matrix emerging from the analysis of sites of practices and the identification of units of intervention leading to action and change. The

other three approaches which I contested were identified as the Hierarchy approach, which cannot conceive of a social work practice outside of Methods; the Spectrum approach, which conceives of Methods as located in a continuum and the Organic Approach, which presupposes the notion of 'community organization' as the primary method subsuming all other sub methods like casework, groupwork, etc.

In my opinion there is weakness for structural analysis in social work. This has had detrimental effects on social work education, a product of which is our 'caste blindness' and a pejorative understanding of tribes in both our teaching content and perspective building. Prof. Ramaiah has stated the same in the article I cited earlier. I might be wrong on this one point but from what I know I think TISS is probably the only institute in the country that offers courses related to Dalits in the form of Dalit Social Work. But I must state here that DTSW has not come as a gift from anyone but is a result of the struggles of a very few critical workers. Till today there is a resistance from Traditionalists. Like always, their argument is that there is only one social work (which is defined by them) and anything different is a subversive act that will lead to a fragmentation of social work. They simply cannot tolerate or appreciate difference and have least ability for self introspection at least in the context of the realities of the country. You know, across social work schools in the country the issues of Dalits are barely visible. It is only on rare occasions that one gets to hear about the plight of Dalits in the corridors of social work schools – from

educators and students alike; and you know all this in a country where historical oppression experienced and witnessed had dehumanized fellow human beings to a state of untouchability. For a profession that claims social justice, equality and human rights as its cornerstone, the invisibility of the Dalit category and concomitant engagement against caste oppression in our social work training content is preposterous. Indian Social Work education is characterized by a ubiquitous blindness to the caste reality vis-a-vis Dalit reality. Many educators have preferred to bury the caste phenomena as some system of a bygone era, long dead and gone whilst passing nondescript comments from time to time to score ethical brownie points and project an overt image of sensitivity to the cause of the marginalized. Reasons for caste blindness are not hard to find. It is an open secret that majority of Social Work Educators in India come from upper caste communities – their world view dominates and is deeply entrenched in social work education and at times, is nothing less than all-encompassing. The very few critical social work educators use this fact to point out the hypocrisy of the 'Caste Blind Traditionalist' school in social work. Notwithstanding the same, of late, critical articulations have become far more explicit within social work teaching content. It is in this context that one must view DTSW. As an alternative discourse DTSW is deeply entrenched in the Indian reality. DTSW has endogenous roots and deep organic linkage to the Indian social reality emerging from Dalit realities themselves which are mainly attributed to their critical and aggressive conceptual deconstruction of the notion of 'Caste Hierarchy' and the

historical brutality it has unleashed upon the masses of the country. Further, pertaining to the hold that caste has had and still have on the Indian social, political and economic reality, this has led the oppressed to confront structures that exclude and oppress them. In the same breath, while tribe does not ruffle feathers too much within social work education, it is deeply embedded within a paternalistic frame.

Q. What has been the response from students and the academic community as well as field practitioners to Dalit and Tribal Social Work?

Ans : Well, among universities that steadfastly profess to engage in education for social transformation, I think the Tata Institute of Social Sciences is definitely a pioneer. New ideas, especially those that are for the empowerment of marginalized peoples within the ambit of our Constitution, are greatly encouraged and nurtured. The Institute's Vision and Mission clearly states this and most of us work towards realizing this goal. However, tension prevails when it comes to caste and Dalits. The issue of Tribes creates lesser ripples compared to the Dalit question. This is felt among Faculty and even more among students. The overall response from the academic community has been positive. But the social work fraternity is yet to digest the very idea that there can even be something like a Dalit and Tribal Social Work. I've had a number of acrimonious debates with social work educators on this count. The fact of the matter is that most of the educators who resent the idea of a DTSW come from the higher echelons of the caste hierarchy. It is natural that one, who is not restricted by the

caste system, nor suffer the pains of its reality, will find it difficult to even begin to comprehend the same. I think Paulo Freire is correct in arguing that this is because "it would be naive to think that the dominant classes will create a form of education that allows the dominated classes critically to perceive social injustices".

Dalit and Tribal organizations on the other hand have welcomed this breakthrough positively. Most people and groups working on Dalit and Tribal empowerment have often told me that till DTSW came, they were not able to connect or make sense of professional social work. Some of them go to the extent of perceiving professional social work as an upper caste activity formulated by themselves for themselves, in the name of the marginalized other. Let me not elaborate further on this point. The truth about professional social work, especially the borrowed traditional kind, is out in the open for all to see. However, within the social work sorority things are changing a bit, there is a strong emerging resentment against traditional social work. Educators are starting to see the lethal consequences that traditional social work has had for social work practice in India. There is increasing demands on social work schools to shed the traditionalist and elitist nature of its practice and engage more truthfully with fundamental socio-political-economic issues that dictate the reality of India. In this regard the direction for social work education and its educators in India is clear – that the profession, as a whole, must challenge the notion that social workers are agents of control (hand in glove with all those who oppresses) and reclaim our role as agents of change.

Q. Are any other schools of social work contemplating on starting a similar course?

Ans : I have seen the Karve Institute of Social Service taking up a similar conception at a seminar. At the International Seminar to celebrate their Golden Jubilee, Dalit and Tribal Social Work was one of the sub themes for discussions. Some of us are also trying to create academic platforms for social workers interested in publishing their work and analysis in journals. DTSW in social work programmes is an idea whose time has come. It would be hard for professional social work to resist the idea if they wish to become relevant to the Indian reality and its concrete conditions. In my opinion the current traditional social work content dominates social work programmes across the 270 plus social work institutes in the country – caste and tribe is invisible.

Q. Why did you not name it MA in Dalit and Tribal Social Work instead of Dalit and Tribal Studies and Action?

Ans : There were many processes that where shaping up when Masters programmes were formulated and sent to the Academic Council. There were many who were against the idea of a Dalit and Tribal Social Work and I know many still are. We did propose the Master's programme to be named as Dalit and Tribal Social Work but the arguments given by those who disagreed was that there is only one social work, and the idea that in a single school of social work there can be programmes named differently would tantamount to saying that social work is not united and would lead to the fragmentation of social work. Let me

leave the details of further arguments there and not tell you more as I would be ruffling feathers unnecessarily. However, I will state that I do not agree with the argument given. This argument that there is only one social work is a traditional conservative argument within the profession by people who see the emergence of other schools of thought in social work as subversive and a challenge to their historical grip. Now that the programme is called M.A. in Dalit and Tribal Studies and Action, we are able to bring in massive content from Dalit and Tribal Studies into our curriculum, coupled with a thrust on Action that is directly related to the empowerment of these two socially constituted and historically invisible identities. This way the programme has become far more theoretically sophisticated, and in tune with both the best in the social science and critical social work.

Q. Can you tell us how do you organize field work for the MA programme?

Ans : My responsibilities over the past five years have been three fold (i) to coordinate the teaching programme (ii) to coordinate fieldwork placement of students with various fieldwork organizations across the country which includes monitoring and evaluation of fieldwork and (iii) to work towards quality control of both teaching content and fieldwork processes. Regarding fieldwork, we have specific organizations working on Dalit and Tribal issues which are recognized by the Institute as official fieldwork agencies. They provide field engagement opportunities for our students and also take part in the evaluation process of students. The number of fieldwork agencies working on

Dalit and Tribal issues has grown from an initial nine agencies to twenty four agencies. Students are placed for fieldwork for a period of five weeks (blocks) from end August till end September in the third semester and for another block period from mid November to mid December in the fourth semester. We have in place a different system for fieldwork. We train our students in various other skills such as Community Radio and other related skills. Our students have to also complete all tasks assigned by the agency to them. At the end of each placement our field supervisors from the agency evaluate our students based on specified criteria. Each student has to complete writing a Personal Placement Diary and a Summary of Practice; to be submitted for their final semester evaluation by their fieldwork supervisor at the Institute. In the fourth semester students would have to also submit a publishable article (at the level of a working paper) based on their field experience on a specific issue and defend the same in a viva as part of the final evaluation process at the Institute.

Together with the above practice skills imparted to students, the concentration's main thrust is on student's ability to critically engage in an in-depth structural analysis of the Indian social reality. We invest special efforts to inform our students about indigenous frameworks and debates rooted in the reality of our country. Dr. Ambedkar's writing is a compulsory reading in the concentration. We pay special attention to the lives and contribution of indigenous thinkers in their emancipatory efforts against caste oppression, tribal empowerment and

inclusive development processes. The core theoretical contents encompass history of the world, modern Indian history; political sociology; contemporary political theory; political economy; law, justice and democratic rights, subsumed within an Dalit and a Tribal Social Work paradigm.

Students are placed for a period of two months over two semesters in Dalit and Tribal People's movements across the country, non government organizations and international organizations such as International Labour Organization, Action Aid, etc. Students can also opt to work on specific self chosen themes under the guidance of a faculty member. Till date students have chosen to work on; Seed Rights, Tribal Rights, Tribal Art and Craft with development workers and communities in Northeast, Land and displacement with activists in Odisha and Jharkhand, Indigenous culture and media with communities in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Manipur.

The programme also has a compulsory research component organized in a very comprehensive manner by faculty in-charge. The research component engages deeply with subjects of ontology, epistemology, logic, axiology and a range of research designs such as Narrative, Phenomenological, Ethnography, Case study, Survey, Policy and Participatory Action Research.

Q. From your own personal experience, what is the current debates pertaining to social work curriculum?

Ans : There are six debates that are becoming stark at this juncture of social work education. (1) is there anything like

a 'core' of social work (2) what are methods – does methods define our practice or does context determine our skills (3) what is indigenous social work; do we have a specific Indian social work (4) does the Indian reality demand a generic or specialization formulation of our M.A. programmes (5) our we welfare practitioners, NGO workers, charity workers or social activists (6) and finally are we agents of control or agents of change, meaning what is our political ideological position? I have been thinking a lot on this issue, and I must tell you that among social workers and within the social work profession, if there is anything called a core in social work, it is our value system. This is what brings us together and also probably ties us together. We might not practice our values as we preach it, but at least we do profess similar values overtly. Other than that I do not think there is anything else which is core. The 'methods' are definitely not the core of social work, especially Casework, Groupwork and Community Organization. If I was asked to formulate a skill set for social work at this juncture I would probably argue for welfare practice, policy practice, social research and social action.

Q. As I understand from what you have stated, this Masters programme is not only academic in nature but aims to directly intervene with the lived experience of people. How do you envision delivering the same?

Ans : In DTSA, students are exposed to the latest theoretical debates from a meta-discipline approach pertaining to indigenous peoples, the dalit reality, Indian state and world geopolitics. The programme uses reflexive

pedagogy led by faculty who are renowned for their ability to facilitate such processes. Student's testimony to this stands witness to the theoretical sophistication, experiential depth and emancipatory nature of the programme. A number of academics and development workers from across the world deliver special lectures periodically. Students have the opportunity to work with people's movements and international organizations in India and South Asia for a period of two months. A number of students of DTSA have gone on exchange programmes abroad after passing the International Students Office interviews. Every year the programme receives exchange students from across the world making the classroom setting extremely diverse, theoretically stimulating and experientially enriching. The programme is academically rigorous and demands dedicated work, commitment and very high standards from students. Student feedback of the programme, faculty and fieldwork agencies have been extremely positive.

Q. In that context what kind of students is DTSA looking for?

Ans : We are looking for academically oriented students dedicated to the empowerment of Dalits and Tribes. Students interested in understanding Indian structural realities from the lived experiences of Dalits and Tribes would greatly benefit from the programme. Those who have a degree in History, Human Geography, Anthropology, Sociology, Cultural Studies, Peace and Conflict Studies, Political Science and any Humanities subject would find the programme both challenging and fulfilling. Students of Bachelors in Social Work with

interest in Dalits and Tribes would be greatly enriched by the theoretical depth that the programme offers. Activists with any academic background having few years of experience with people's movements would find the programme extremely insightful and engaging. The programme is the first of its kind in the world, providing students with wide theoretical exposure to international politico historical and political economic discourses situated within the lived and shared experiences of Dalits in South Asia and Tribes from India and other regions of the world.

Q. Tell us about the students over the years. Also, how do you deal with sensitive issues like caste in a classroom of students from varied social groups?

Ans : Our students come from varied backgrounds. While in the beginning we had more Dalit and Tribal students opting for DTSW, currently upper caste students and OBC students outnumber Dalit and Tribal students. We have students from various caste backgrounds from across the country and Tribal students from Chottanagpur, Meghalaya, Manipur, Assam, Tripura, Mizoram, Rajasthan, Ladakh, Orissa and Andhra. We also had a number of foreign students opting for DTSW from countries like Argentina, Sweden, Czechoslovakia and France. Our class room environment is really diverse. Diverse in all senses – caste, tribe, class, gender, abilities, nations, regions, language, religion, etc. It was initially very difficult to handle such a reality but over the years we have learnt and managed well. We give a lot of importance to pedagogy and minute curriculum principles. We impart critical education and use student centric pedagogy in the Ambedkarite sense

grounded around the freedom of mind. That is, we move further than trying to dialogue about the cycles of oppression in which oppressor and oppressed engage to understand processes of dehumanization, to inserting at the core of our dialogues, secular identity based categories of Dalit and Tribes as we unravel layers of oppression and the processes of intersectionality. We embed our dialogues deeply in critical history and socio political realities. Political economy is a key content and we bring the same in discussions, but we do not make political economy core in our analysis of Indian society. Most of us hold the view that caste is the defining overarching premise of Indian society and we opine that while class stratification of caste societies is taking place at a rapid pace and there is definitely class within caste, however there is no class identity across caste yet. To us, there is poverty in any analysis of the concrete Indian conditions that does not consider caste as a fundamental defining reality. These processes are explained to students from the very first day of the programme and we have seen that it has worked well. In this context I must state that all of our teachers are groomed in Dalit Social Work and Tribal Social Work teaching pedagogies and geared towards handling complicated situations pertaining to student dynamics.

Q. In today's very competitive job market, in the government or non government sector – what kind of jobs are available for students passing out from Dalit and Tribal Studies and Action?

Ans : The course provides perspective and skills to carry out work in numerous sectors. Majority of the DTSA alumni are deeply embedded in people's movements across

the country. Some have chosen to work with International Rights Organizations such as Action Aid, International Labour Organization etc,. Some work with National organizations like Kudumbashree, North East Research and Social Work Networking, etc,. Others have joined corporate organizations such as Tata Trust, ONGC, NTPC, ITC, HPCL etc. Many are working with government development agencies such as the Prime Minister's Rural Development Fellowship (Ministry of Rural Development), Bihar Rural Livelihood Promotion Society etc. Some are pursuing their doctorate studies from universities in Europe and America and from Indian Universities like JNU, HCU, IIT, TISS, etc. and many alumni have entered teaching and research positions across Indian Universities.

Q. Can I get your personal viewpoint on the upcoming Indian Social Work Congress, 2013 organized by the National Association of Professional Social Workers in India?

Ans : Am not a member of this Association, on this ground I think it is unfair for me to make any comments on the aims, objectives and agenda of this group. Probably the only thing that I can point out is that they are both, caste blind and tribe blind. I was reading through their brochure and there was not a single mentioned of the word Dalit or Tribe. We have our own Professional Social work Association – the National Association of Progressive Social Workers, and I think none of our members will participate in such Congresses, especially those among us who see these gatherings as acts of a few to invisibilise the problematics of this country. However, I think that the

discipline is enriched with more Social Work Associations, but it is an irony that these Associations rarely discuss the defining realities of this country. The issues of dalits and tribes are shunned in these gatherings and sadly that is what defines educators and practitioners within the profession today. Now, as to why these professional social workers don't discuss caste and tribes? All of us are aware of the caste locations of professional social workers in the country, you may make your own conclusions, I need not say more.

Q. Any future plans that you would like to share related to DTSA?

Ans : Colleagues in TISS are working towards setting up a Tribal Intellectual Collective India that would facilitate the discussion and production of knowledge on tribal issues more minutely and develop practice paradigms that are congruent with the lived experience and felt needs of tribal peoples. We also have plans to organize a series of regional conferences on the theme 'Reassembling Tribal Studies in India' and a National Dalit and Adivasi Women's Conference. Our students are brought into these forums to participate actively.

In Retrospect

As a programme we have expanded tremendously and we have also got deeper insights into the two realities we are engaging with. Probably my conception of 'Dalits' and 'Tribes' now would be very different from the one I articulated in 2012. I have incorporated some of these understandings in this book embedded in the other chapters.

There are also two very clear distinct themes that have emerged in DTSA. One is the practice stream rooted much around social entrepreneurship and another around academics. Students who pursue the DTSA programme come to the course with these kinds of objectives. It is both challenging and exhilarating to teach the DTSA programme. Many of the students are very grounded and sincere, with an unwavering commitment to the empowerment of historically peripheralised groups.

The latest domains and theories that inform our programme are much more in the realm of philosophy with a bent on methodology. Theoretical frameworks such post structuralism and the Navayana learning framework identified very closely with the ideas of Babasaheb Dr.B.R.Ambedkar, constitutes the core constituent of the learning/educating framework.

Some Concluding Remarks

Finally, as a closure to all ideas expressed in this text, I take liberty to express two points. One is that each of the chapters in this book is my lecture and discussion notes delivered to DTSW students. These notes constitute my insights derived from field engagements, discussions with my social work colleagues and reflections with my own students in numerous occasions and spaces spanning a period of seventeen years, from 2003 to 2019. When I wrote these notes down, they were written as part of my engagement with a certain context, and in many ways were my ways of responding to such prevailing concrete conditions and concomitant contextual demands. Thus

when I decided to bring each of these notes into this book I did so with the understanding that plus the propositions made in the process of responding to such unique contexts, each of the chapters were also, in my opinion, of historical value and significance to social work in general, and dalit and tribal social work in particular. In the light of the same, I believe that this is also how this text should probably be read.

Secondly, it is important for me to also assert that many of the ideas expressed in this book are markedly different from the theoretical perspectives and content that dominates social work education and practice. My intent in sharing my lecture notes through this book has been to engage with the more progressive intellectual community in the discipline. This I consider imperative as part of an effort to contextualize and enrich social work education, notwithstanding the fact that such theoretical propositions will be shunned and rejected by conservative educators who dominate social work education even before such ideas are read. Nonetheless, this kind of anti-intellectual attitude within the discipline should not be the reason why progressive, contextual, diverse, dialogical, organic and humane knowledge should not be produced, written and discussed.

THE NAVAYANA EDUCATION PROJECT

TOWARDS A NEW KNOWLEDGE THAT HEALS

This book brings together lectures and field notes on the subject of social work education. Most of the notes written down are based on empirical observations and constitutes the core of domain related academic lectures delivered to students of the Master of Arts in Social Work. These reflections, written over a period of time, are spread across varied theoretical domains. They include lectures on the history of social work education, the idea of the 'field', the curriculum structure, fieldwork supervision, 'methods' and on navayana social work. Most of these ontological reflections are contextual. There is no particular line of epistemological enquiry sans the fact that each of the reflections were attempts to engage deeply with social work education at various points in time and in response to specific curriculum needs.

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ISBN 978-81-942059-2-0

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