ISSN 0976-5484

SOCIAL WORK JOURNAL

(Bi-Annual)

Volume 6 Number 1 January-June 2015

Published by
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK
ASSAM UNIVERSITY, SILCHAR – 788011
Assam, INDIA. Phone: +91 3842 270821
www.aus.ac.in

Volume 6 • Number 1 • June 2015 • ISSN 0976-5484

SOCIAL WORK JOURNAL
(Bi-annual)
Department of Social Work
Assam University, Silchar – 788011, Assam, India

This issue was published in September 2016.

SOCIAL WORK JOURNAL (BI-ANNUAL)

Volume 6, Issue 1 **January-June 2015**

ARTICLES

SOCIAL WORK JOURNAL
(BI-ANNUAL)
ISSN 0976-5484
6 (1) January–June 2015, pp. 1–5

EDITORIAL

From the time when social work education and training emerged in Victorian England to the current postmodernist times, it has come a long way. With the move from 'charity organisation' and 'service-delivery' to organized social work practice, different methods of social work practice emerged. Currently, six methods of social work practice are recognized by the institutions of social work education; Social Casework, Social Group Work, Community Organisation, Social Action, Social Research, and Social Welfare Administration. These methods evolved in Social Work with changes in the context of practice. The reference to the context is also important as certain methods came to be practised more in the developing and under-developed countries than in the developed countries of the West.

However, as the origins of social work education are located in the West, the western line of thought has had a strong impact on the development of social work education in India during its early period. The two countries that have pioneered the development of social work education in the world are United Kingdom (UK) and United States of America (USA). Of these two, India majorly adapted the USA model of Social Work in the beginning. In India social work education started its journey with the inception of Sir Dorabji Tata Graduate School of Social Work in 1936 (now known as Tata Institute of Social Sciences), under the leadership of Clifford Manshardt, an American missionary in Bombay.

Beginning 1936, social work education in the Indian context has completed almost 80 years today. From being concentrated in metropolitan cities and big towns initially, institutions imparting social work education have been established all across the country including the geographically isolated areas of the North-East. This expansion of social work education in diverse Indian contexts has witnessed both continuities and shifts at different levels of social work education as well as practice. One must confess that, the field of practice has been the more dynamic partner which has, many a time, led to changes in different aspects of social work education. Whether, it is – the curriculum, pedagogy, research, or fieldwork training – each of these aspects have had to respond to the dynamic contexts of social work practice in India. Thus, social work education has expanded to include Marxist, post-structural, feminist, *dalit* and tribe centered

perspectives besides the continuation of charity, clinical and ecological perspectives.

The twin objectives of bringing out this issue are: (i) to capture some of these continuities and changes in social work education in India, and (ii) to track different aspects of social work education in some departments and schools of social work in India as they stand today.

This special issue of Social Work Journal presents articles and research papers which fit under the broad theme, "Perspectives on Different Aspects of Social Work Education in India". A set of ten articles and papers are included in this issue. These articles and papers have been contributed by social work educators and researchers across seven institutions of social work education in India. These include: (i) Ambedkar College, University of Delhi, (ii) College of Social Work, Nirmala Niketan, Mumbai, (iii) Department of Social Work, Assam University, Silchar, (iv) Department of Social Work, Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Imphal, (v) Department of Social Work, University of Delhi, (vi) Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Guwahati, and (vii) Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai.

In the first paper titled, "Social Work Research and its Methodological Vicissitudes in Tata Institute of Social Sciences", Prof. Jaswal and Dr. Kshetrimayum examine the changes in social work research methodology vis-à-vis the doctoral of philosophy programme at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences. Their review of seventy-eight PhD theses awarded by the institute in the last fifty years suggests three major changes in social work research which can be seen through three distinct phases: (a) Inception/Initial Phase (1967–1979); (b) Expansion Phase (1980–2005); and (c) Post Restructuring Phase (2006–2014).

The review suggests that from 1971–2000 the predominant methodology in social work research was quantitative based on positivistic ontology and epistemology. In the 21st century there was a tremendous growth in qualitative methodology in social work research based on the interpretive approach to the study of social phenomenon, that is, social construction of reality. Lastly, the mixed methods approach based predominantly on the idea of methodological triangulation (initially overshadowed by the strictly positivist and interpretive approaches) started to get popularized and has seen steady growth in the 21st century. Finally, in the concluding discussion the authors observe that influenced by factors such as – theoretical foundation, external environment, internal environment of TISS, and social sciences methodology – the adoption of qualitative research followed by mixed methods research in recent years also helped in both contextualizing social work knowledge and interrupting the American model of social work education in India.

Prof. Mouleshri Vyas in the paper titled, "Transacting the Community Organisation Curriculum in the Classroom as a Social Work Educator" traces her experiences of teaching community organisation to master's level social work students, placing the pedagogy instead of curriculum as the locus of discussion. She narrates how more than twenty years of teaching community organisation has made her reflect on new questions to interrogate certain phenomena and practice elements with a community lens. In the initial discussion she points out

that three factors, namely, – (a) value base of social work, (b) method focus of community organisation, and (c) nature of literature available to teachers and practitioners – have significantly determined the 'what' and 'how' of community organisation as a subject in social work. The paper includes three major sections under the following subheads: (i) the course on community organisation, (ii) the classroom, and (iii) discussion of changes over time and how the field has become more challenging. Basically, the paper is built as a narrative which finally highlights the role and significance of young practitioners in community organisation having the perspective to work with the most marginalized sections of people. Moreover, community practice requires social workers who have the ability to take people along in their work and are acquainted with the tools and techniques used in community organisation.

Dr. Shweta Verma in the paper titled, "From Teaching to Practice: Reflecting on the Role of Social Work Educators" explains that 'professional development' is a process that continues throughout one's journey as a student and later as a professional. She focuses on the role of educators in teaching and grooming the student by learning into becoming a social work professional. She further highlights that classroom learning, supervision and fieldwork placement is evidently interrelated in helping the students to understand the values and principles of social work. Hence, the three should be integrated in student's growth as a social work professional. The article further mentions that social work educators and field practitioners themselves have to be committed towards core values of this profession by portraying themselves as role models in everyday interactions with students. This will help them in transferring commitment towards social justice.

Dr. Ronald Yesudhas in the article titled, "From Functional to Social Justice Stance: A Review of Social Work Approaches" presents different approaches which have been formulated in the quest for a common conceptual framework for social work practice. He initially discusses the models and theories which were developed based on systems perspective underpinned by theoretical assumptions of structural-functionalism such as 'ecological theory', 'person-in-environment model' and 'integrated social work practice model'. He then provides a critique of the systems perspective and discusses the approaches under social justice umbrella countering the earlier models of social work practice. These include – radical social work, critical social work, feminist social work, anti-racist social work, anti-oppressive social work and anti-caste social work. Finally in the concluding discussion he argues against the system maintenance models that perform the function of social control, and argues for the urgent need to develop indigenous social work practice models committed to rights and justice.

In the fifth paper titled, "Reflections of Practitioners on Social Work Education: The Case of Street Children" Dr. Kaivalya T. Desai attempts to capture the views of paraprofessionals and trained social work practitioners working with street children on social work education. After drawing the aetiology of the issues and problems of street children, he discusses the implications that social work education and training have for practice with street children. The discussion focuses on the methods, fieldwork training and the

supportive domain content in social work education and its implications for practice with street children. Finally, based on in-depth interactions with practitioners across five cities – Bangalore, Chennai, Delhi, Kolkata and Mumbai – he discusses the reflections of practitioners on social work education. This primary data was collected by the author as a part of his doctoral research work. Thus, the paper is based on one of the aspects of his doctoral research.

In the paper titled, "Women in Displacement Camps: Towards a Comprehensive Framework for Social Work Education", Shafeef Ahmed and Dr. Yasir Hamid Bhat use exploratory research design to get an in-depth understanding of the effects of displacement on the mental health of internally displaced women living in Hapachara camp, Assam. The findings indicate that displacement and life within the confined space of the camp affects the mental health of women, thus a base for the social work intervention is required. The paper reflects that the exploitative structure of gender roles is further entrenched in the context of displacement. The paper concludes that social work practice as well as the discipline must endeavor to analyze and contain the gender dimensions of internal displacement and various factors which engender the women IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons). They further critically highlight the structural factors that underlie to make an informed comprehensive intervention and link social work values with practice.

In the article titled, "Fieldwork as Signature Pedagogy of Social Work Education: As I see it!" Prof. Pamela Singla reflects upon fieldwork components at post-graduate level in social work education at the Department of Social Work (DSW), University of Delhi, during the period between 2010 and 2013, when she held the important position of Director, Fieldwork there. After introduction, Prof. Singla highlights the significance of fieldwork in social work education. In the subsequent section she introduces the various components of fieldwork as they have existed from 1984 till 2010 specifically at DSW. Following this she spells out the various changes that took place in different components of fieldwork training at DSW post 2010 till 2013. In addition, she narrates the deliberations that took place before these changes were made. Finally she reflects on the job placements that have taken place for social work students during her tenure as Director, Fieldwork at DSW.

Dr. Swati Bist in "Social Work Education for Undergraduate Students: Issues and Challenges in Field Work" reviews modalities and structure of field work practicum in social work education for undergraduate students. She sheds light on the components of fieldwork and the role of field work supervisors. The article further discusses on certain dilemmas and challenges that educators faced during supervision of students at the undergraduate level. It is due to limited exposure of students to various social groups and social issues; they face difficulties in adjusting with the change from predictable school environment to an unpredictable and ambiguous field work situation. Finally, the author recommends the role of supervisor in becoming the critical link between the student and the field.

Dr. Shukhdeba Sharma Hanjabam and Dr. Ningthoujam Rameshchandra in the article titled, "Social Work Practice and Conflict Situation in India: A

Preliminary Observation" states that the militarized culture has been witnessed in the North East Region of India for long. The article argues that the present social work practice particularly on conflict situation has not been able to contribute significantly in resolving the conflict peacefully. There is a need to incorporate the experiences of research and practice that focused on the conflict areas into the curriculum of social work in India. They further emphasize that there is an urgent call for incorporating the issues of conflict resolution into the curriculum of social work particularly in the conflict ridden states of North Eastern region as students are engaging with these situations both in their practice and education.

Mr. Bijoy Das who recently completed his master's in social work in Assam University, Silchar, recounts his experiences in the article "Social Work Education: An Experience from Barak Valley, Assam". The article discusses the challenges encountered by the trainees in applying theoretical knowledge to the field and vice versa due to generic nature of course contents in the curriculum. He further reveals that due to limited agencies for placement, and lack of qualified agency supervisors, students encounter challenges in practicing relevant social work methods in the field. He also mentions that after completion of Master's in Social Work, students prefer jobs outside the valley due to lack of employment opportunities and lesser salaries in the region. He emphasizes that even the recruiting agencies are reluctant to come for campus recruitments due to connectivity issues leading to migration of future practitioners to places outside the valley. This probably highlights the lack of awareness vis-à-vis the scope of social work practice in Barak Valley.

M. Tineshowri Devi and Kaivalya T. Desai

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Social Work Research and its Methodological Vicissitudes in Tata Institute of Social Sciences

Surinder Jaswal and Melody Kshetrimayum

Social work research began in India with the introduction of PhD programme at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai in 1967. Since then, it has witnessed shifts in epistemologies and methodologies. This paper traces the course of social work research in the Institute by reviewing doctoral theses submitted since the inception of PhD programme. Influenced by the philosophical assumptions and the 'research culture' of a given time, social work research had relied on quantitative methodology and then, on qualitative methodology. Simultaneously, a steady growth of mixed methods research is also observed. The paper finds out that, with the change in epistemology, nature of social work research in the Institute is changing and shaping in connection with ground realities of people. This process is contributing to theoretical knowledge, factual knowledge and practical knowledge.

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Introduction

Social work research has taken different forms and shapes globally and many countries are trying to establish their own form, separate from the influence of American social work. Social work has been restructured and reorganised vis-à-vis privatisation, managerialism and neo-liberal politics, which eventually influenced the context of social work research (Gibbs, 2001). It has witnessed paradigm shifts, debates about methodology, epistemology, the role and purpose of research, and the use of evidence in practice (Maynard, Vaughn, & Sarteschi, 2014). Bodies of knowledge or epistemologies have been instrumental in shaping social work research. Similar to social science research that celebrates positivistic and non-positivistic dichotomy, social work research mainly rests on these two important epistemologies globally (Gibbs, 2001).

A review of social work theses of different universities (Brun, 1997; Dellgran & Hojer, 2003; Fook, 2003) examined the methodologies employed in social work research. Maynard *et al.,* (2014) looked at the trend of methodologies selected for doctoral studies and the methods used by different scholars. It was seen that the findings were focused mainly on recognising the dominant methodology by examining frequencies of methodologies used rather than explaining the use of a particular methodology to explore new issues. Explanation of the methodology would have helped to understand the controlled and responsible development of social work research based on valid knowledge (LeCroy, 1985). Gibbs (2001) examined and discussed the main epistemologies that shaped social work research globally. However, since the context of social work research is not universal or linear, the developments may be different in different contexts. Keeping this in mind, this paper attempts to investigate how social work doctoral scholars at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, arrived at a particular methodology to be used for their doctoral study to understand/ identify the scientific contribution of the studies to the social work knowledge base.

The Indian social work profession started with the establishment of Sir Dorabji Tata Graduate School of Social Work (now known as the Tata Institute of Social Sciences) in 1936. In this span of 80 years, the profession has spread and gained popularity across the country. From a profession that was initially shaped and influenced by American social work to one that encompasses growth of several thematic areas of practice and knowledge and indigenous knowledge development, Indian social work has come a long way despite facing many structural and diversity challenges. Social work education in India is today recognised as a moral and practical activity (Jaswal & Pandya, 2015) and it creates a knowledge base of realities of vulnerabilities, oppression and injustice vis-à-vis poverty, gender, caste, religion, ethnicity, development, conflict and environment.

In 1967, social work research was introduced in India with the introduction of the doctoral programme at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS). Since its inception, the Doctor of Philosophy programme has undergone three major changes, which can be seen through three distinct phases in the fifty-year time span of the PhD programme at the institute. These are the a) Inception/ Initial phase (1967–1979) that prioritized the state and non-state institutions and welfare activities; b) the Expansion phase (1980–2005) that continued the trend of the inception phase as well as showed advent of non-institutional and public issues; c) the Post Restructuring phase (2006–2014) that focused on creating and promoting development or improvement of various sections of population rather than focusing only on peripheral groups. Social work research in TISS is a complex and multi-dimensional phenomenon where knowledge, perspectives and practices are often interlinked and compared. It encompasses broad spectrum and types of research. The broad spectrum in social work research can be linked to India's ancient and modern aspects of socio-cultural ethos and political history such as caste-based social hierarchy, experience of colonisation, independence movement, the birth of a new nation, its cultural and linguistic diversity and presence of voluntary social work since ancient times (Kuruvilla, 2005). With its

first doctoral study awarded in 1975, TISS has been a prolific contributor in creating social work knowledge base for implementing interventions, policies and programmes. Examining the vicissitudes in research methodology adopted in social work research would establish valid knowledge that is essential for strengthening and expansion of social work education and practice.

All the seventy-eight social work theses submitted at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai from 1967 to 2015 were reviewed. A review matrix of the theses was prepared to delineate the social work research domain, methodology adopted, the methods used for data collection and types of analysis employed in the research study. The matrix was analysed to examine the preferred methodology for each domain of study as well as to examine the rationale for choice of the research design and analysis plan for the study.

The next three sections detail the key methodological approaches identified in the theses followed by a discussion and conclusion of the emerging trends.

The Quantitative Base

Traditionally, the methodological approach in social work research is based on quantitative strategies. Since the 1960s the more structured and pre-determined research designs dominated within social work at the TISS. Mahtani (2004) claimed that historically, social work, like other social science disciplines, has relied on structured, pre-determined research designs, which are today classified as belonging to the 'quantitative methodology' of research. However, over the past four decades, non-positivist constructivist epistemologies (qualitative methodology) have taken strong roots in social science research (Nakkeeran, 2006). This trend gradually extended within social work too.

A methodology is adopted based on the ontological and epistemological assumptions made by the researcher. Having said that, arriving at a methodology for a research study is also very much influenced by the research culture of a given time. Quantitative methodology was not only the popular methodology among researchers in 1960s but also the main approach on which the researchers were trained.

> Our acquaintance with the former (quantitative) approach has been the foundation on which we have been nurtured as researchers first and social workers next and we are all too familiar with the process of collecting data using standardised instruments administered to a population group using scientific and logical measures of analysis in order to draw inferences and arrive at generalisations to the extent possible to substantiate, complement or negate an existing theory / hypothesis or to formulate a new one. Exciting stuff indeed..., the entire process of deduction, though labourious, gives us the end result to defend our hypotheses using a logical, systematic and 'scientific' procedure (Stanley, 2004, p. 342).

The problem of obtaining knowledge rested mainly on positivistic ontology and epistemology and pre-determined research designs. It could be said that qualitative methodology was in 'dormant state' during this period although some researchers did adopt the methodology. Positivism heralded by Auguste Comte

believed human behaviour to be observable, measurable and predictable (Nakkeeran, 2006), motivated researchers to look for measuring frequencies of occurrence of human behaviour and its association with occurrence/ existence of other situations. Quantitative research methodology views social reality as an object of study and believes that social realities are external to social actors (Mahtani, 2004). It considers human behaviour to be observable, measurable and even predictable and also advocates that the social world should be studied only through directly observable behaviour such as marriage, childbirth, suicide, employment and so on rather than through values, opinions, beliefs and so on (Nakkeeran, 2006). The tenets of positivism influenced a large section of educators and eventually the researchers to pursue social knowledge through its philosophical assumptions.

Table 1: Methodology of Social Work Research

a) Methodology/ b) Rationale for choosing a methodology	**Domains of studies**	**Methods used for data collection**	**Analysis Plan**
a) Quantitative (Positivism) b) Training and nurturing.	Mental Health (7), Health (5), Management (3), Women's Studies (2), Rural Development (2), Social Work Education (1), Disability Studies (2), Criminology (1), Medical Social Work (1), Social Legislation (1), Resource Mobilization (1), Child Care (1), Social Work Practice (1), Substance Use (1) and Aging (1).	Structured; semi-structured and unstructured interviews; observation and official records and documents; schedule for assessment of psychiatric disability; the family burden scale; questionnaire, the social support schedule and schedule for coping; survey.	Descriptive analysis; discriminant analysis; survey analysis; statistical tests (chi-square, gamma, corrected contingency coefficient).
a) Qualitative (Non-positivism) b) Nature of subject, improved conceptual clarity, training and nurturing.	Mental Health (5), Social Welfare (1), Social Work Education (1), Health (3), Women's Studies (2), Criminology (3), Social Work Practice (1), Substance Use (2), Ecology and Environment (1), Adoption (1), Power Relation (1), Social Movement (2), Disaster (1), Administration (2), Agriculture (1), Corporate Social Responsibility (1), Social Entrepreneurship (1), Conflict (1), Gender (1), Child Care (1).	Ethnography, in-depth and semi-structured interviews; observation, background information sheet; key informant interviews; FGDs; document reviews; questionnaires.	Thematic; content; Narrative analysis; comparative analysis; cross-organisational analysis; cross case; historiography.
a) Mixed (Pragmatism) b) Nature of subject, improved conceptual clarity, training and nurturing.	Social Policy (1), Disaster (1), Social Work Education (1), Management (2), Health (2), Resettlement and Rehabilitation (1), Rural/Community Development (1), Substance Use (1), Criminology (1), Disability Studies (1) Voluntary Organisation (1), Parenting (1).	Unstructured interviews, questionnaires; structured; observation; FGDs; participant observation; and physical artefact; survey.	Descriptive analysis; case study analysis; thematic analysis.

Notes: (1) The numbers in parenthesis indicate the number of theses.
(2) Two theses could not be reviewed due to lack of information.

The following figure shows the course of Quantitative, Qualitative and Mixed Methods Research in social work research.

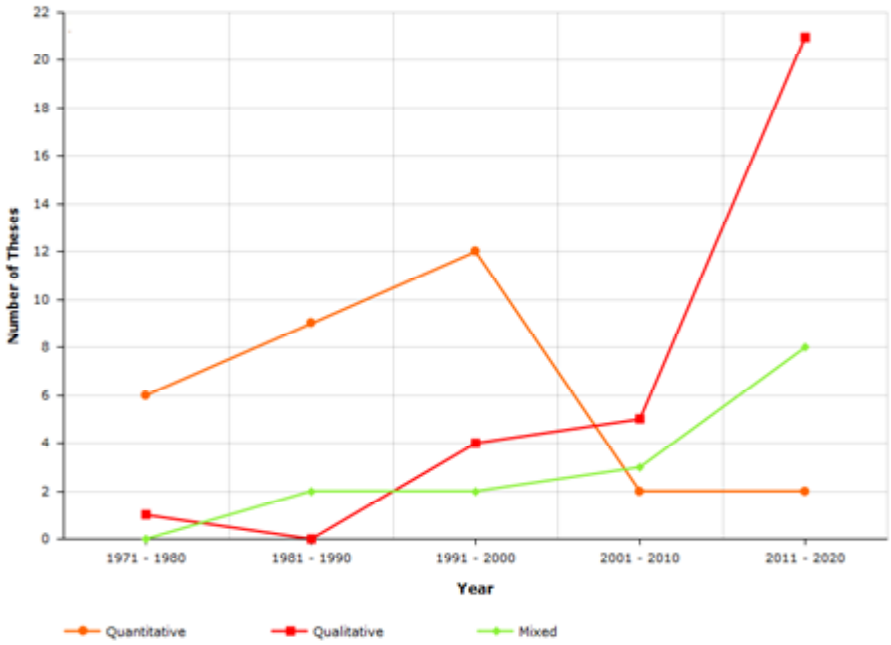

Figure 1: Quantitative, Qualitative and Mixed Methods Research Curves

Between 1971 and 2000, social work research was dominated by quantitative methodology. The domains that adopted quantitative methodology included Mental Health (7 theses), Health (5 theses), Management (3 theses), Women's Studies (2 theses), Rural Development (2 theses), Social Work Education (1 thesis), Disability Studies (2 theses), Criminology (1 thesis), Medical Social Work (1 thesis), Social Legislation (1 thesis), Resource Mobilization (1 thesis), Child Care (1 thesis), Social Work Practice (1 thesis), Substance Use (1 thesis), and Aging (1 thesis). Mental Health, Health and Management domains that constitute an important space in social work research contributed a large number of researches, which adopted the quantitative methodology. Planning, services, programme, management, perceptions, support systems, politics, development and experiences were investigated in different settings that range from rural and urban settings to medical and correctional settings and from voluntary and government settings to educational and custodial settings. The purpose of the investigations was mainly to understand the frequency of certain phenomenon. The researchers were interested in studies pertaining to issues such as trend/ situations, provision of services, triggering factors, family and peer influence, coping strategies, treatments and many such issues. Other domains that also adopted the quantitative methodology were Women's Studies, Rural Development, Social Work Education, Disability Studies, Criminology, Medical Social Work, Social Legislation, Resource Mobilization, Child Care, Social Work

Practice, Substance Use and Aging.

A codified approach to each step in research design is seen in earlier research. Formulating questions, specifying theories, deriving hypothesis, selecting sampling and data collecting methods, analysing and testing the results in relation to the hypothesis, reporting the findings was the regular course of research process. The underlying philosophical assumptions that would influence a particular use of methodology were rarely discussed. The deductive logic of inquiry seemed to be the ultimate choice for most of the researchers.

A wide variety of social science theories were employed in addition to social work models to derive hypothesis. Emphasis on Karl Marx and Emile Durkheim was placed by a large number of earlier research investigations to engage their theoretical perspectives. Subsequently, the methodological rigour only increased with researchers' engagement with deduction of theories. For instance, Theory of Psychoanalytic technique, 1958 by Karl Augustus Menninger; Community Power Structure, 1953 by Floyd Hunter; Central Place Theory, 1933 by Walter Christaller; Psycho-analytic Theory, 1916–1917 by Sigmund Freud; and Structural Strain Theory, 1976 by Robert Merton were discussed as theoretical frameworks. Concepts and variables derived from these theoretical frameworks were used to test hypothesis or to propose new hypothesis in mental illness, alcoholism (deviant behaviour), aggressive behaviour (mental health), settlements and power structure.

Underpinned by positivistic assumptions, methods that are designed to make clear distinction between the researcher and the participants were employed in the above domains. Structured mode of data collection such as structured interviews, schedules, rating scales, questionnaire and surveys were used. Surveys and structured interviews were most commonly used. While these methods maintained space between researchers and participants, they also enabled the relationships between participants and situations/phenomena to be observable, measurable and predictable. However, positivist researchers did make use of interviews, observations and case studies to explain a given phenomenon. Statistical analysis like chi-square test, t-test, one-way ANOVA, Spearman's rank correlation and gamma test were frequently used (see Table 1). Standardised methods of collecting data and analysis were used to draw inferences and arrive at generalisations.

Very few earlier researches discussed the validity of tools. For example, in a study on 'disciplinary actions of industrial organisations' validity and reliability of the tools were calculated using item analysis (correlation) and split halve method respectively. Quantitative analysts claim superiority in terms of 'scientific' validity and greater generalisation of findings (Stanley, 2004) but this advantage was utilised by only a few researchers.

Considering or following ethical norms for conducting research is critical to enhance trusted environment of the research and to avoid conflicts of interests between stakeholders. However, earlier research did not give much importance to ethical issues nor raise ethical dilemmas. It was possible for the researchers to anticipate ethical issues while dealing with sensitive issues such as mental health, health and criminology. But they did not discuss or mention ethical considerations

thoroughly as code of ethics did not form a crucial part in research at that time. The dearth of appropriate ethical guidelines in social work profession in the Indian context could also be responsible for this oversight/ gap.

Between 2001 and 2010, use of quantitative methodology showed a sharp decline (see Figure1). The growth and acceptance of qualitative methodology among academicians in social work had a significant role to play in this decline. This was further influenced by the methodological change in the social sciences. Jones (2010) justifies the decline of teaching and use of quantitative approach in social sciences, as the result of post structuralism. The likes of Levi-Strauss, Foucault, Levinas and other authors with similar ideologies, engaged their research in qualitative logic of inquiry in various social science disciplines. This methodological change in social sciences impacted social work methodology too. Figure 1 shows that the decline in Quantitative methodology has remained consistent.

Growth of Qualitative Methodology

The beginning of the 21st century showed tremendous growth of qualitative methodology in TISS. Teachings of non-positivism generated good results during this time when a large amount of research was produced using qualitative methodology. The growing interest was due to the naturalistic nature of qualitative research that is, it studies populations in question in their natural setting; it uses naturalistic methods, such as field work, field study, and generally methods that are familiar to the people living in these settings. At the same time, social work is a discipline that involves the study of people, their activities, events and behaviours (Mathbor, 2001).

Qualitative research methodology encompasses a family of research methods based on interpretive, non-positivist approach to the study of social phenomenon that examines the processes by which the social world is constructed by its social actors (Mahtani, 2004). It gives importance to human subjectivity. It believes that realities are socially constructed by individuals from their own contextual interpretations. Reality includes beliefs, values, meanings, motive, feeling, perception, consciousness and sense and so on. It emphasise on processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured in terms of quantity, amount, intensity or frequency.

The compatible relationship between social work and qualitative methodology could also be explained in relation to the importance given to ‘context’. For instance, ‘community’ as a concept and context occupies an important place in social work research and it is used by numerous researchers. To understand its ethics, values and culture or to construct ‘it’ from participants’ perception, researchers need a thorough understanding of its people and their social, political and cultural values. Moreover, reducing people (and their relationships) to numerical symbols and statistical figures result in a loss of perception on the subjective nature of human behaviour. And, it is known that qualitative research methods are highly appropriate in studying the process, because it provides a complete account and chronology of the events, situations, belief system and

values of the people (Mathbor, 2001).

Qualitative methodology emphasise the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship of the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). It stresses that people's account of their social world or people's knowledge is not determined in any principled way by what is there (Gergen, 2004) and therefore, objects and events do not have an essential universal meaning and people's perceptions are not a matter of internalising a truthful representation of the world (Burr, 2003). As a matter of fact, it emphasises that people construct their own subjective world through shared understanding, practices, language and so forth (ibid).

Mental Health (5 theses), Health (3 theses), Criminology (3 theses), Women's Studies (2 theses), Administration (2 theses) and Substance Use (2 theses), constituted the main domains of qualitative research in social work. Mental Health and Health received commendable interest from both quantitative and qualitative researchers. A broad range of mental health areas such as psychological, clinical, disorder, discrimination and treatment were studied using qualitative paradigm. Other qualitative research domains included Social Welfare (1 thesis), Social Work Education (1 thesis), Social Work Practice (1 thesis), Ecology and Environment (1 thesis), Adoption (1 thesis), Power Relation (1 thesis), Social Movements (2 theses), Disaster (1 thesis), Agriculture (1 thesis), Corporate Social Responsibility (1 thesis), Social Entrepreneurship (1 thesis), Conflict (1 thesis), Gender (1 thesis), Child Care (1 thesis). New domains that had qualitative methodology were Disaster, Social Movement, Agriculture, Social Entrepreneurship, Gender and Conflict. Qualitative methodology is growing and becoming popular amongst young researchers studying diverse domains in social work.

Qualitative researchers seemed to have been obsessed with the theoretical perspective of Denzin and Lincoln (1994, 1998, 2000); Berger and Luckmann (1967); and Creswell (2003). With this obsession, they placed themselves in a position to explore meaning constructed by participants from their own experiences. Grounded Theory of Glaser and Strauss (1964), and Strauss and Corbin (1990) was used by qualitative researchers as the main theoretical guide for their investigations. Processes of entering the field, familiarising with people and the context, observing and understanding the nuances of local languages, building social relationship with people, interaction with participants, iterating the data, reflecting on the data, analysing and writing up, constituted the main research process. Theoretical frameworks such as capability approach by Sen, 1999; behavioural theory by Gartner (1985, 1988) and the effectuation theory by Sarasvathy (2001); bio psychosocial model, 1977; Maslow's humanistic approach, 1954 and theory of structuration by Anthony Giddens, (1984) were used to guide the investigations.

Social work research drew on social sciences theories as its main source of theoretical foundation. With new theories evolving, particularly in social sciences, concepts and ideologies were frequently discussed and compared in relation to the context and individuals. As a result, there is improved conceptual clarity, which deepens the theoretical foundations of social work research. For instance,

the concept 'women empowerment' was usually related to income but with the development of more theories, it has become a contextual concept. 'Social security', 'movement', 'affinity with institutions' and 'engagement in recreational and leisurely activities', are some sub-concepts that constitute to women empowerment. It connotes different meanings in different contexts and this 'narrowing down' improves clarity. Theories that are specific for a particular context are used to guide investigations. Subsequently, this improved the conceptual framework of investigations.

Sampling in qualitative research involves not only the people to interview but also the context and settings of the study. Theoretical, purposive and snowball sampling methods were dominantly used by the researchers to identify research participants. The very nature of theoretical, purposive and snowball sampling methods to remain context-specific and the strength to ensure that the concepts discovered completely represent the context of the phenomenon studied (Mahtani, 2004) provided the rationale for using them to identify participants.

Unstructured interview, participant observation, ethnography, case study helped researchers to get access to in-depth details of people, situations and events of a context (see Table 1). These methods were used to give meaning to life experiences, beliefs, social realities and values. The process of iteration allowed by these methods enhanced data and enabled the researchers to discover layers of information. The flexible procedure of these methods allows researchers to discover emerging themes. Insider and outsider quandary was discussed and carefully handled by the researchers. Other methods used were focus group discussions, group interview, oral history and structured interview. Use of multiple methods not only enabled the researchers to capture multiple perspectives but also established validity of the studies.

Thematic analysis was preferred by many researchers since it allows analysis of data which is 'rich' and 'thick' in description of people and phenomena. Researchers engaged in organising a mass of data chronologically and arriving at themes to give meaning to the data. Qualitative researchers also used diverse methods of data analysis namely content, narrative, comparative, and descriptive analysis. These methods, while analysing rich and thick data, focused on story, narrative organisation, form, language, communication and comparison of cases.

Social work research started early to engage in theory construction in 1990s but somehow, it only accelerated during the 2010s. Emergent theories were mostly the extension of previous theories, which emerged through the research process. Emergent theories reworked the inter-linkage of concepts of existing theories such as Lehman's Quality of Life models (1988), Sen's Capability Approach (1999), Anthony Giddens's theory of Structuration (1984) and The Ecological Systems Theory. The interplay between the guiding theories helped researchers to locate the emerging concepts and rework on the conceptualisation. Eight studies used grounded theory as the main approach to generate theory out of data. Theories constructed out of grounded theory were generated from propositions that linked concepts and categories. These theories emerged 'originally' through researchers' inductive research process.

Qualitative researchers attempted various steps to ensure the 'quality' of their study. Very few researchers established 'trustworthiness' of their study and maintained validity. In qualitative research, trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) has been proposed as consisting of – credibility in place of internal validity – transferability in place of generalizability –dependability in place of reliability – and – confirmability in place of objectivity. Prolonged engagement with the field, performing member checks, capturing and respecting multiple perspectives, integrating of theory with practice (praxis), staying aware of the his/her position and making it overt, detailing the research design, sampling, data collection, analysis and drawing attention to the specific ethical considerations served the main steps taken. Findings emerged from the data maintained confirmability. A major proportion of qualitative research needs to discuss more on credibility, transferability and dependability so that the trustworthiness of their studies is not questioned.

Informed consent, confidentiality, autonomy and not giving false promises were the main values and ethics maintained by the social work researchers during their studies. Informed consent was the most used 'value' to get permission from the participants of the research to share information. Confidentiality was maintained by most of the researchers to protect the privacy of the participants and secrecy of their information. The ethical decisions were taken in accordance with the context of research, that is, researchers took contextual ethical decisions related to the values and beliefs of individuals and communities in the field. Topics not thought to be sensitive can rapidly become so and sensitivity and distress may only become manifest during the research process (Davison, 2004). While some of the decisions were taken prior to the study, others emerged as the fieldwork progressed. The relationship between the researchers and the participants were kept cordial by maintaining these context-specific values and ethics.

Qualitative methodology is the new craze amongst young researchers and its theoretical perspective disseminates quicker in research communities. Its popularity could be due to: nature of reality under study (turmoil, culture, practices, infrastructure, policy implementation and many others); methodological popularity (conventional methodologies adopted in wider literature) and; internal developments (training and nurturing, faculty and peer pressure, support and facilities availability, values and thrust areas promoted by schools of social work and so on).

The growth of mixed methods research

The principles of social work discipline supports methodological diversity and that is well utilised by a few researchers to investigate their problems. The use of mixed methods research is consistent since the beginning, however, the dominance of quantitative methodology and then the growth of qualitative methodology overshadowed its presence. Realising the importance of mixed method research, several authors (Desai, Jaswal, & Ganapati, 2004) have discussed its potential that positing that it can strengthen social work research and social work as a discipline. (A variety of methods were suggested in research

works if social work research is to be people-centred and scientific.)

Mixed methods research involved integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches to generate new knowledge and can involve either concurrent or sequential use of these two classes of methods to follow a line of inquiry (Strange, Crabtree, & Miller, 2006). While the paradigm debate of mixed methods research continues, many scholars have linked mixed methods research with pragmatism (that is, the approach may combine deductive and inductive thinking, as the researcher mixes both qualitative and quantitative data) (Creswell & Clark, 2011). Pragmatism is typically associated with mixed methods research and the focus is on the consequence of research, on the primary importance of the question asked rather than the methods, and on the use of multiple methods of data collection to inform problems under study. Thus, it is pluralistic and oriented toward "what works" and practice (ibid.). The theoretical underpinnings of pragmatism posit that there are both singular and multiple realities of a social world and these realities are discovered through 'practicality', that is, collecting data by 'what works' to address the research question.

The domains of social work research that adopted mixed methods research in the analysed theses were Social Policy (1 thesis), Disasters (1 thesis), Social Work Education (1 thesis), Management (2 theses), Health (2 theses), Resettlement and Rehabilitation (1 thesis), Rural/Community Development (1 thesis), Criminology (1 thesis), Disability Studies (1 thesis), Voluntary Organisation (1 thesis), Substance Use (1 thesis), Parenting (1 thesis). The studies were either consequence-oriented or problem-centred. For instance, study on 'effect of alcoholism on the emotional intelligence of adult children of alcoholics' (Substance Use) was investigated using consequence-oriented mixed methods research. Parenting and Voluntary Organisations were new domains in social work research. Within the broad combined theoretical perspectives, role theory (Robbins & Sanghi, 2007), critical theory (Mayo, 1999); the behavioural model of healthcare of Anderson and Newman (1973); sustainable livelihoods framework by Majale (2002) were used to guide the investigations and were used as framework of analysis. The theories were also used to derive variables in studies that investigated health services. Constructivism and phenomenology were usually combined with positivist formulations to examine both socially constructed realities (subjective experiences) as well as characteristics of people and phenomena. Other approaches that were used to combine with positivist formulations were positive psychology and humanistic psychology.

Triangulation was used to gain multiple perspectives of an issue or problem. According to Jayaram (2006), it can be of four types – data triangulation, investigator triangulation, theory triangulation and methodological triangulation. Researchers mainly used methodological triangulation by combining both qualitative and quantitative methods. Unstructured interviews were combined with assessment indices and structured interviews. Mixed sampling was also adopted in mixed methods research by initially using probability sampling, followed by non-probability sampling methods. Purposive sampling, snowball sampling, simple random sampling were used at multiple stages of sampling procedures. Mixed methods researchers carried out analysis at multiple levels.

Triangulation of data constituted the main step in mixed methods research where merging and synthesising the findings across different data sets takes place. Most researchers used thematic analysis and descriptive analysis.

Only a few studies validated their data and incorporated 'descriptive statistics forming trends' into the analysis to test validity. Apart from using quantitative validations, 'triangulation' and 'preserving the context of data' were used to validate qualitative data. Reliability was ensured by using various methods like developing an 'interview protocol for case study'.

The majority of mixed methods research emphasised ethical considerations of the study. Being constantly aware of his/her own ethical principles is the crux of a social worker's professional responsibility (Fernandes & Dass, 2000). It helps them avoid any incident of violating trust of their participants and prevents tarnishing the image of researchers. Confidentiality, anonymity, informed consent, rule of beneficence and rule of non-maleficence were the main ethical considerations used in mixed methods research. Confidentiality, anonymity and informed consent remain the principles used most often in social work not only in quantitative and qualitative research but also in mixed methods. Rule of beneficence and rule of non-maleficence were new principles used by mixed methods researchers in order to act towards others' benefit and do no harm to the participants. The ethical decisions were taken with strong underpinning on understanding of ethical guidelines of social work profession. Mixed methods researchers emphasised the ethical considerations and discussed them thoroughly.

Discussion and Conclusion

The methodological perspective of social work research mainly comes from two distinct philosophical approaches: the positivistic and the anti-positivistic. 'The former, following the French philosopher and sociologist Auguste Comte (1798-1857), proclaims methodological monism (that is, the unity of method as the basis of all science), and the latter, following the German philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911) and the German sociologist Max Weber (1864-1920), advocates methodological dualism (that is, separate methodologies for natural sciences and human sciences)' (Jayaram, 2006, p. 5).

Epistemologies in social work research changes with the changing context. Australian social work research that started in 1920s does not limit itself within the traditional quantitative and qualitative paradigms but draws on a number of different research approaches from the humanities as well as the empirical social sciences (Fook, 2003). Swedish social work research, started in late 1970s, is dominated by qualitative research, which can be described as a rural landscape of knowledge with a certain degree of urbanisation (Dellgran & Hojer, 2003). Britain and New Zealand social work research have evolved from large scale descriptive and policy oriented research to applied practice based research which have qualitative and quantitative elements (Gibbs, 2001). The present review of social work research at the TISS indicates that positivism and non-positivism (constructivism, phenomenology, and constructivist grounded theory)

methodologies have dominated social work research in turns.

Social work research at the TISS is going beyond the traditional quantitative nature of investigation. The nature of subjects is changing with more interest towards social structures (gender, ethnicity, power relations, faith), traditional practices (reproductive health practices, informal credit practices), forms of injustice and discriminations (displacement, conflict and disaster related vulnerabilities, gender, disabilities, mental illness), people's struggles (social movements, rights), deviated behaviours (substance use, criminology), mental health related practices that call for methodologies which can capture subjective experiences. As a result, researchers tend to embrace the non-positivistic methodologies. As observed in Figure 1, qualitative and mixed methods research curves are ascending. The inductive nature of investigation in these research studies generates new theories from the data. As the emerging theories developed from primary data, they are closely connected with the ground realities of people, thus shaping social work research in accordance with social realities.

The curves of growth indicated the dynamics of quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods research evolution. Quantitative research stressed on use of sampling methods, research methods, test of validity and reliability, analysis. The theoretical perspectives, on which the researches were based, were given less importance and ethical considerations were neglected. In qualitative research, main emphasis was given to theoretical perspectives, use of methods, data collection, field dynamics and analysis, and theory generation too in some studies. Ethical guidelines, theory generation, trustworthiness needs to be articulated to strengthen the methodology. Mixed methods research placed emphasis on the use of multiple methods, data collection, analysis and ethical considerations. Overall, the organisation of studies and emphasis given at each step of the research process has strengthened over the years.

Indian social work was observed to have been influenced by the American social work model (Mandal, 1989). This trend was interrupted with the adoption of qualitative research, followed by mixed methods research, dominating social work research in recent years in TISS. The change in methodology has been influenced by several factors, a) theoretical foundation – visible in the emerging theories with improved conceptual clarity; b) external environment- visible through a better understanding of the social, economic and political aspects of the country; c) internal environment- setting up of Centre for Research Methodology, training and nurturing, faculty and peer pressure, values and thrust areas promoted by school of social work and; d) social sciences methodology- having shared people-oriented 'knowledge' and 'science', social research impact social work research in its ontologies and epistemologies.

To conclude, the contours of social work research is shaping in connection with ground realities of people. Its body of knowledge or epistemology is expanding with emerging theories. The vicissitudes in its methodology strengthen the social work knowledge base by capturing holistic perspectives and realities of people and phenomenon. Evolving process of theory building and deepening is contributing to social work education and practice /theoretical knowledge, factual knowledge and practical knowledge.

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SOCIAL WORK JOURNAL
(BI-ANNUAL)
ISSN 0976-5484
6 (1) January–June 2015, pp. 22–33

Transacting the Community Organisation Curriculum in the Classroom as a Social Work Educator

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As poverty and marginalization increase in India, there is a greater need for social workers who can work with various constituencies. Community practice, which may be aimed at facilitating people's access to services, mobilizing and organizing them, or engaging in policy advocacy on a range of issues, is increasingly required and relevant. As a key subject within the discipline of Social Work in preparing practitioners for this field, today Community Organisation in the classroom too is faced with challenges that reflect the complexity of the larger environment and the field. Teaching of the subject and transacting the curriculum in the classroom is an interesting and dynamic experience. In this paper, I trace my experiences of teaching the course on Community Organization for several years and reflect on changes that have taken place over the years in the classroom and outside. I have tried to place the classroom, rather than the curriculum, as the locus of my discussion. To some extent this discussion would give an idea of the present context of community work in the country, and my concerns as a social work educator in preparing practitioners through classroom teaching.

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Introduction

I cannot recall the precise year that I started teaching Community Organisation, a basic course for first year students of the Master's programme in Social Work at the Institute. My memory when I began what I can safely put as twenty years ago, was of discussing the content and plan for the course with two colleagues who had been my teachers. We taught the course in three divisions then. I remember that I then had about forty students in my class. Today with more than two hundred and twenty students, and four divisions, I teach the course with three other colleagues. It has been significantly modified over the years, with various teachers bringing in their ideas and field experience to suggest how it can be made

more relevant for the students.

As with courses that are important in any programme and have been taught for long years, Community Organisation (referred to as C.O.) too, was handed to me to start preparing myself to teach with some notes, readings, and a course outline by my predecessors. I was keen to get into it, and also a bit baffled about how to begin, and what style to adopt in teaching; the image in my mind was of my teacher who was now a senior colleague, and whose style was a story-telling mode; he wove in illustrations from the field, that were rich with complexities and questions. While we thoroughly enjoyed listening to him, we were unable to write any notes in the class, because we got lost in the narratives, and often could not put a finger on the key points that he may have been making. The other division was taught by a teacher whose lectures could be documented in the form of notes. Group study saved us. In retrospect those were the heydays of group study, and mutual support. In the 1980s, we did not need our teachers to tell us how to share notes and study.

Within the discipline of Social Work, the Community was understood primarily as a unit of practice. Individuals, groups, and communities came to mean levels of work. Given the nature of field work placements in a range of sites, and student efforts to link the classroom with the field, there were times when students found that they either 'did community work' or did not. So sites of practice, or 'settings' as they were called, were also associated with the methods that they utilized. It was not uncommon to find some students feeling at a loss in the C.O. class because they were not 'doing' any community work. For instance, students placed in a prison did not find scope for what they understood as community organization. We answered their queries and pointed out that the influence of communities was evident in the lives of the prisoners and in the effect it would have on their rehabilitation or re-integration. They needed to see the role of the community and scope for working with the community within and outside the prison irrespective of whether they were working in that direction themselves. We have gradually established the importance of the perspective for community practice and emphasized the importance of the context in shaping strategies and other elements of organizing. Such an analysis increases the scope for community organization to sites other than geographic settlements, or what are typically seen to be communities for practice.

There are certain factors that have shaped the curriculum as well as the pedagogy of the course: historically, social work methods comprise casework, group work, community organisation, social action, social research, and social welfare administration. All of these are essential in practice, and have traditionally been taught with a knowledge base, skill focus, and thrust on developing the appropriate attitude required for practice. The values of Social Work are the bedrock on which these three aspects are developed. With these values, and guidelines for practice, there is considerable scope for interpretation and discussion with students. Second, the 'method' focus of Community Organisation gives it a character of practical application to the field. While this has been re-visited in recent years, it has always been important for the social work educator to stay connected with field initiatives, and to imbue the classroom interaction with

references from the field. Third, the fact that in India, the literature on this subject and that available for teaching, came predominantly from the United States and Britain meant that there had to be a consistent attempt to adapt the curriculum to Indian realities in a number of ways. In this regard, one of the quick efforts that we were able to make was to bring in case studies from the field. These have built nuanced understanding of students about components of community organization. Further, there has been a conscious attempt by social work educators to write about community organisation in India: Andharia (2013) attempts to re-conceptualise community practice in India with a transdisciplinary perspective. In a special issue of the Community Development Journal (2009) various social work educators and practitioners contextualize community organisation and practice with a focus on specific aspects of development. These continue.

The above three factors viz. the value base of social work, method focus of community organization, and nature of literature available for teachers and practitioners, have significantly determined the 'what' and 'how' of Community Organisation as a subject in social work at the Institute where I teach.

The other and very significant factor is to do with the importance of community organisation in the country. In India, community practice which comprises direct community work and organizing as well as advocacy on issues of marginalized communities and community segments is relevant and in fact increasingly required. While the image of 'community' that the term 'community organization' creates is predominantly that of a geographic community or settlement, the understanding has moved much beyond it to encompass communities of common interests or concerns where members may be geographically dispersed. Poverty and marginalization are experienced in the country by communities, or by individuals who are part of communities in terms of identity or geographic location. In a context where poverty and vulnerability are widely prevalent (GoI, 2009) and resources to pay social workers are scarce, with social work practitioners being largely informal workers, it is still necessary to be able to reach more people for service provision or mobilizing around a particular issue. The experience of a union of informal workers with an office in an urban low income settlement illustrates the importance of their presence and role in the area: the union aims to focus their work on mobilizing and organizing informal workers for entitlements as workers and finds that it is inundated with requests for help for a wide range of problems like domestic violence, alcoholism, and issues with ration cards and accessing essential commodities at the local outlet, that are being faced by local residents who may not be members of the union. In such places, where there is minimal presence of government or voluntary organizations, the union office is seen as a place where people are helpful, have access to information, and would be able to provide guidance to those who need it. They have to extend themselves, though they may operate within severe financial and human resource constraints.

In this backdrop, for several years now, I have been realizing that teaching of this subject has made me reflect on new questions, to interrogate certain phenomena and practice elements with a 'community lens', and built my inclination towards certain approaches in the field of community practice, perhaps

influencing me as a person in ways that I may not be able to articulate clearly. I thought it worthwhile to therefore attempt what hopefully emerges as a coherent discussion of what it has meant to teach Community Organisation for several years to many batches of first year Master's students of Social Work.

In this paper, I trace my experiences of teaching the course and reflect on changes that have taken place over the years, in the classroom and outside. Some of the analysis is likely to be the outcome of collective thinking rather than mine alone. I acknowledge the discussions with several colleagues over the years that have shaped my own understanding of the subject and the field. Rather than centre the curriculum in this discussion, I have tried to place the classroom as the locus of my discussion. To some extent this would give an idea of the context of community work in the country, and concerns in preparing practitioners through classroom teaching. The paper comprises three sections: first, the course on Community Organisation; second, the classroom; and third, changes over time into which the discussion is organized.

The Course on Community Organisation

The course on Community Organisation has evolved through interaction among the team of teachers. Other than wider reading from various social science disciplines and social work, our involvement with field organizations that are mobilizing and organizing communities and/or are working towards community development has enabled us to sharpen the content and our approach to it.

Students of community practice need to locate their work, approaches, as well as conceptualising in a historical context. For a practice discipline like Social Work this must necessarily draw upon academic as well as gray literature and field experiences. The last two have to be consciously drawn upon as field experiences and insights have often not found their way into published work. As mentioned earlier, since we used existing literature from the West to begin our teaching, part of the challenge of teaching the segment of history and issues of community work was to construct and interpret the history. In fact, students need to begin reading and listening with an idea of the importance of history, which enables them to situate their work, challenges in the field, their questions and their insights, in a context. This is easier said than done, because not all students have a yen for history; as important is the fact that not all teachers are able to construct and teach history in the same way. The history of community organisation within the discipline of social work is uneven and attempts at teaching it may be found to have gaps of events and of decades. What starts with a discussion of the Settlement House movement in 19th -20th century England and the U.S. (Weil *et al.*, 2005), then moves to mid-20th century India with the Community Development Programme (Siddiqui, 1997) and concludes with a debate on where we are at the present point of time. Various authors dwell upon it and construct it with varied emphases. So we refer to different sources to construct a version of history that builds an understanding of the present. Students need to grasp why we practice the way we do, the fact that threads of strategies and analyses continue over the decades across continents for particular reasons, and there is

immense diversity in community practice within the Indian context. This also means that for those who do not read to supplement what they learn in the classroom, the history of C.O. may remain a compilation of initiatives at community work across countries at various points of time.

A course such as this, which is a practice focused or methods course in Social Work, is meant to provide clarity to students about working in the field. This primarily begins through the discussion of values, assumptions and principles of community practice. The latter in particular, serve as guidelines for the field, and shape the nature of engagement. While they are not taught as prescriptions, they point to certain 'dos' and 'don'ts' in community work. Strengthening this practice thrust is the segment on tools for community assessment. In familiarizing students with preparation of outline for Community Profile, Participatory Mapping, Stakeholder Analysis etc., the approach is that one should learn how to prepare, how to use these instruments, and to recognize misuse of these to further the interests of the oppressors or exploiters, while utilizing these very instruments to work in the interests of certain sections of the community (Dominelli, 2007). The politics and power play that is embedded in practice must be recognized by the practitioner starting out in this field. Critical community practice that builds on the aspect of *power over* and *power with* brings incisiveness into the analysis of community situations as well as of practice (Butcher, Banks, Henderson & Robertson, 2009).

The propensity among practitioners to discuss their work with thick descriptions of places, incidents, actions, and analyses, while being a source of information and knowledge, needs concepts and theoretical formulations around which to wrap these experiences. Students in particular, are so immersed in the intensity of their fieldwork experiences or doubts about how to link them with what happens in class, that often times when I ask them to highlight the nature of Community Organisation in their fieldwork context, they launch into a narrative of the nature of work, speaking about the sequence of activities they have participated in and experiences that have struck them. This is not to say that there is no point in such description; in fact, for those not familiar with the context, these details are necessary as a background to understanding the nature of practice. It is in an academic space or meetings where there is focus on specific issues that one would find the audience getting restless, and wanting the speaker to 'come to the point'. Theoretical formulations and concepts are useful as they enable a succinct presentation of complex realities that one is working within, and lay the ground for studying newer contexts of practice by providing concepts that one can focus on and begin with.

It is here that the study of models of community practice has stood the test of time. Early work on models by Jack Rothman in the 1960s explicated components of community organisation viz. goals, strategies, conception of the community, the role of the social worker, among others. These, and his later formulations, have brought coherence into understanding and explaining a field that is immensely diverse. (Rothman, 2008) There is some excitement in the visual and theoretical study of a model because of the stimulation it provides for those who are in this field. It poses the challenge of trying to 'fit' one's work into certain concepts that

are related to each other to paint part of a broad picture; it also offers the prospect of finding gaps in what has been outlined based on one's reading or experiences. So for the teacher of C.O. this is a critical part of the course that one draws upon to lend substance of a certain kind to the 30 hours in the classroom. The subsequent work on conceptual models for community practice (Gamble & Weil, 2011) is more recent and therefore allows us to trace the progress of model development from the 1960s which is when Rothman's initial work emerged, to the post-2010 period, when Weil and Gamble have refined and detailed their 8-model framework for community practice. As a teacher, the emergence of new literature on the subject has meant that there is an added impetus to teaching the topic and some excitement that emanates from developing the key points for discussion in the classroom.

The transaction of this curriculum in the classroom is not simple. Assuming that the teacher is well prepared for the class, at times it is not possible to 'deliver' the entire content that one has planned to, because having a discussion about it in order to make students reflect and connect with their fieldwork is very crucial to the meaning and impact that the topic has for them. This means that they would need to do library work to substantiate the classroom discussion. The classroom itself is a ground that is marked by diversity and subtle and overt contestations of ideas and practice propositions. A few of these are highlighted in the next section.

The classroom

Some of my most lively and stimulating, as well as frustrating moments as a teacher have been in the classroom for the C.O. class. Let me construct an image of what the C.O. class is like: the students belong to various specialisations in social work. They could be preparing for work in the field of health, criminal justice, disability, or with specific constituencies such as women, children, families, dalits and tribals, or with rural or urban communities on issues of their development. In the first year of their Master's programme in Social Work, most boys and girls from across rural and urban areas in the country are in their early 20s; a few are older or come with experience of having worked in the field,. This heterogeneous group that finds itself in the C.O. class is mostly still trying to grasp what social work is about. There are several reasons for this: they come into this social work programme from various disciplines, and not necessarily even from social sciences. The very language and goals of social work would need to be learned before being absorbed and practiced by them. Secondly, even those who come with a Bachelor's degree in Social Work may take some time to grasp how the course is focused; this is because Bachelor's level curriculum for Community Organisation varies across universities in the country and does not show clear progression from one level to the next. Consequently, there may even be some repetition of some of the content for those coming from the under graduate programme in Social Work.

The content and pedagogy of the course offers scope for considerable discussions in the classroom. For some years we grappled with the aspect that social workers need to be reflexive and to work on themselves in order to be

sensitive to issues of the community to which they are likely to be outsiders, and to gain the acceptance of the community. The latter is crucial in community work in countries such as India because of the fact that the mandate for practice to the individual or organisation needs to be earned from the community. It is not yet derived from one's identity as a professional. Our concern was pedagogical in that we needed to mould classroom discussions so that they could contribute to developing reflexivity at least to some extent. For several years, discussions on Gender, Principles of Feminist Organising, and Power led to heated arguments among the students centering around their personal experiences as men and women, and inconsistencies that they perceived in classmates about statements in the classroom and actual behavior outside, about discrepancies in behavior in the field and in their personal lives. The classroom was seen as a space where individual thinking and perspective could be clarified and developed, and one of the ways to do this was by debating among themselves with the teacher as facilitator.

Social Work education and practice is value based. There are certain sources that values of social work may be seen to have been derived from, including influence of religions of the world (Weil & Gamble, 2011). The methods obtain their value focus and normative bent from the discipline. These values are understood as being universally accepted. They define the very nature of practice. Valuing the dignity of the individual, that communities should participate in processes that shape their lives, and such other values actually direct community practice. They make judgment of what we should do and what not to in community organization practice. Inevitably, they result in conflicts for the individual practitioner, and between two individuals or communities, since subjectivity plays a strong role in one's interpretation of values. For the student, they also build an image of the community practitioner. This can be an image that lasts in their minds long after they graduate with a Master's in Social Work. In her reflections on community development work in the state of Assam, as an alumna of the Institute, Senapati (2005) discusses how the values for community organisation and the image of the community worker came back to her again and again during her interactions with communities in the course of her work. She gives a lively account of her experiences in the field, her efforts to live up to certain ideals of social work, and the conflicts that these ideals generated. It is evident from her narrative that values when they unfold in particular contexts lead to dilemmas for practitioners. These need to be responded to and dealt with by the individual with their understanding of the framework of social work and how they situate themselves within it.

Teaching the values is challenging to say the least. Classroom discussions are very lively when we discuss values. What is a value? What are examples of individual student's values? Why should a practice profession like Social Work have a value base? These are the starting points for the discussion. However, one is not sure whether these lead to any introspection for the students during their period of study. We assume that some of the discussions stay in students' minds and do influence their work in the field; we may get glimpses of this when they come back to meet us after they leave the Institute and speak about their

experiences. Then again, choices and decisions that students make are likely to emerge from a range of influences and not necessarily any one course. To that extent, the C.O. classroom may realistically be said to be one of the influences on students' work.

Broadly, the C.O. classroom is a lively, and yet uneasy space. It is lively because of the nature of issues and questions that are discussed and debated: "How have communities that I belong to shaped who I am, where I am, and how I think? To what extent should one's identity before-grounded in one's work arena? Is there scope for community practice in institutions? Where should one's allegiance lie – with the community one is working with, or the organisation one is part of? How would one address conflicts between principles of practice and the nature and pace of work of the organisation? If there is no one answer to questions that one encounters in the field, then does practice not depend too much on the context and the response of the individual practitioner? These are some of the questions that have emerged over the years; some are raised by me to provoke thought and discussion among students while teaching, and some asked by them. They point to changes in the profile of students and perhaps to changes in the field. These are the focus of the next section.

Changes over time…and the field becomes more challenging

Changes in the profile of students, as well as in the field, have resulted in some alterations in the manner in which the curriculum is transacted in the classroom. These are to do with the new modes of communication; with students' perception about social work and career orientation; and the project mode of work in voluntary organisations that has gained strength in voluntary organisations.

The advent of social media has changed the nature of communication across the globe, and for young people in the field of social work, and community practice in particular, some of these changes are having more far reaching consequences than we have grasped. Why do I mention the field of community practice? Because in India, this field is unstructured and open; community organizers, largely as outsiders to communities they work with, may not be located in spaces where their mandate is defined; organizations and individual practitioners mostly need to earn the legitimacy for their work from the people that they work with. This places critical responsibility on the community workers to gain acceptance from constituencies they aim to mobilize and organize. Being able to communicate effectively is therefore central to efforts at gaining acceptance. In the field therefore interactions are not always task focused and purposeful; they cannot be. The outcomes of the community practitioner's efforts emerge in subtle and obvious ways but seldom instantly. Only when one interacts with various sections of the community, gains their trust, and therefore insights into issues and views of various stakeholders, can one build a plank for action.

The student entering this field needs to begin developing ease in interacting with new individuals and groups. At the risk for making certain assumptions here, I would say that this is not an easy ask for students who come from nuclear families or backgrounds where there is limited interaction with less known or even

familiar persons in the family or neighbourhood. Some students are hesitant to knock on the doors of houses in low income neighbourhoods where they are assigned for their fieldwork; their notion of privacy and letting people live their own lives translates into reticence to take a step forward to get to know people and what they think about specific issues. Some of them would actually like to have a set of questions that they can keep at hand to aid them in conversations with members of the community. This, according to them helps them in achieving some concrete points that they can work with. This is why conversations with people, especially women, who are busy with household chores, seem to end at the doorway with the student opting to quickly leave from there rather than 'disturb' the person. These are some of the experiences that also come up in the classroom. I ask students questions about community experiences through fieldwork and am struck with the fundamental nature of the issue with communication. As everyday communication and interaction in the city and campus context becomes more staccato and focused, the ability to start conversations, let one discussion lead to another, and to simply be around when daily life unfolds for the community, is restricted. This means that the basket of experiences from which one can learn and gain insights as students of social work and community practice, is restricted.

However, the nature of communication is not only to do with students, there is an element of what is happening with lives of the economically disadvantaged in the city[1]. People, especially the women, are busy through the day. Home based work, domestic work, and other types of employment in the informal economy, added to women's role as homemaker, lead to the double burden of work. Time, space, and means of leisure are limited; it is not uncommon to find people watching television in the afternoon, and a trifle hesitant to engage with student social workers in a conversation about neighbourhood issues. Students say that a query they face sometimes when they visit someone's home as part of mobilization efforts is about what is in it for them (as in that community member). To answer such a query is daunting for the student, who understands that this is actually directed at the organization, and emanates from the relationship that it has been able to build with community members and past experiences of community members with its work, and with that of other similar organizations. The students therefore have a lot to deal with and to answer for, than their own efforts.

The other facet influencing communication in the field and the discourse of community practice within the classroom is the project mode of work that has gained ascendance in the past two decades or so. In this period, voluntary organizations obtained financial support from donor organizations within and outside the country and the funding sector comprising these donor agencies also gradually became consolidated. Funds to voluntary organizations came for a specific period of time and for specific activities as projects. This project mode of work with communities on a range of issues from access to basic services to mobilization for entitlements has meant, among other things, that there are targets

[1] I focus here on the city since TISS is located in Mumbai and our students who are placed for fieldwork experience with urban communities are based to work through government and voluntary organizations with low income settlements in and around Mumbai.

for completion of activities, and for the number of persons to be reached, and so on. When students and trained social workers work within such organizations, they are expected to contribute to the successful completion of projects. This means that classroom discussions on Principles of Community Practice such as working at the pace of the community, community participation as an imperative, community self determination and so on, now need to being in the challenge of following these ideals for practice within the project mode of work that is largely top-down, and may offer limited scope for community participation and self-determination. One of the students came back to me after a few years in the field and pointed out that some of what he learnt about Community Organisation in the classroom created a dilemma for him in the field when he was given a target of mobilizing women into fifty self-help groups within a year. If he were to follow components of C.O. process that he had learnt, he would with difficulty form a few groups in a year, and then have to work to ensure that they were sustained by the members.

Students view the master's programme in social work as offering them good career possibilities. Their learning needs are also along the lines of concrete skills, techniques and problem solving methods. To an extent this mirrors shifts in the larger environment – in aspirations of the young men and women, in increasing acceptance of social work as an avenue for work for young people, and the overall role, and visibility of voluntary organizations at the national and international levels. It also indicates that those who are coming to study social work need to earn enough to support their families and not be dependent on others; the voluntary sector with funding support from donor agencies does make it possible to pay trained social workers decently. However, this is not the practice across all types of organizations. One of the subtle consequences of this profile of students has been that discussions along the lines of normative and ideal practice need to be substantiated by concrete methods of problem solving and search for solutions. So the teacher breaking into a story or case narrative to illustrate certain points is as much needed as the fact that the students need to find the content relevant to answer observations and questions they have from the field.

One of the biggest challenges to community work over the past two decades or so has emerged from the fact that poverty has increased. With it, vulnerability has also been compounded across rural and urban India. Informalisation and contractualisation of work means that more and more people are finding themselves in insecure employment. Migration due to distress from rural to urban areas, and internal displacement of people in cities creates rupture in support systems and the sense of community resulting in social disarticulation. Institutions and systems of governance are changing due to a number of reasons; one of these is privatization of services that results in hidden or visible costs for services that affect the poor adversely. In this broad context, the discourse on community and community organization has to provide space for a re-examination of key concepts and processes. Community Organisation which has drawn to some extent on social science disciplines viz. sociology, economics, political science, and anthropology, needs to continue to strengthen its interdisciplinary approach in order to gain sharper understanding of complex contexts for practice.

As the field of practice becomes more challenging, and the students as products of these very times, demonstrate strengths and shortcomings, teachers need to build stronger interface with the field so that teaching is firmer and clearer without being prescriptive.

I think I have changed in several ways through my teaching of Community Organisation. I remember starting to teach with notes and perspective that were handed to me by my senior colleagues. This entailed laboring over grasping some of the topics and reading about them in order to have enough to say in the classroom. It was engagement with the field through a field action project of my department and other field projects of the Institute, and active engagement with certain people's organizations, that made the field come alive for me. This built my perspective about the nature of alignment that was required from community practitioners in the social, economic and development context of country, because I was able to witness and build my understanding of meaningful change in people's lives. Most importantly, I came across a range of practitioners, saw their convictions, their commitment to social change and realized that many factors go into shaping it; the classroom can be a contributory element in this regard. I think I gained in the confidence with which I was able to state certain points and substantiate them with illustrations. I realize that as long as I am able to listen to the students and discuss with them, I have a chance of making some impact through the classroom on their thinking and way of working.

Conclusion

In the globalizing world literature on community practice has a global reach with case illustrations from various continents. As teachers we have in the past decade and more gained from faculty exchanges and interactions with social work educators and practitioners. We observe closely political, economic, social and cultural changes taking place around us. Community organization requires young practitioners who have sharp grasp of field situation, ability to communicate and take people along, perspective that is clearly to work with the most marginalized sections of people, and must be savvy with tools and techniques used in practice so that they are able to lend a political edge to their work.

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SOCIAL WORK JOURNAL
(BI-ANNUAL)
ISSN 0976-5484
6 (1) January–June 2015, pp. 34–44

From Teaching to Practice: Reflecting on the Role of Social Work Educators

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Social work education is responsible for professional socialization of social workers as they evolve from students into professionals. Without the focus on core values, however, this professional socialization is incomplete. It is increasingly becoming important for educators to reflect on their teaching and learning processes with the question – whether we are able to transfer commitment or adherence to social work values, especially social justice, in learning and practice of social work students? This article focuses on certain aspects of teaching and learning, as well as the role of educators and institutions. It also emphasizes that educators need to demonstrate social work values and principles in their everyday interactions and practice instead of hoping that students should derive all practice related learning from fieldwork experiences only.

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Introduction

Evolution of a social work student into a social work professional is a journey that involves social work educators; experiences in the field as a student and later as a practitioner; activities and interactions within an institution that a student is part of; and various learnings that one draws from all these interactions and experiences. As educators have been and would continue to remain a significant part of this process of professional socialization of social workers, it is important to continuously reflect on how we see our role as social work educators and institutions in India. Often, theoretical inputs are considered to be a domain of social work educators and institutions while practice related learning for a social work student is expected to happen in the NGOs or the field. But if '*the educator should be a facilitator of learning rather than merely a transmitter of knowledge*' (Desai, 2002, p. 212), then are we really performing this role as a 'facilitator'? In addition to this, as educators, how are we aligning our teaching with what we practice everyday in our actions and interactions? Are we

equipped and ready to transfer core values and principles of social work to students and evolving professionals in a manner that influences their future practices?

In this article, I reflect on some of these questions and emphasize on greater engagement of educators and their institutions with core values of the profession as well as with students and community around the institution. By greater engagement, I mean within as well as beyond classroom teaching and routine fieldwork supervision.

Professional socialization as social workers: Aspects involved

Each discipline or professional education has specific methods of teaching and learning that aim to socialize students or developing practitioners into their respective fields. This process of developing practitioners can be called professional socialization. According to Miller (2013), professional socialization is a multidimensional process that occurs at three stages: first, consisting of experiences and learnings before a student enters social work education; second, involving formal education (social work); and the third, that covers career/ practice after completion of social work education.

Following three aspects are considered significant for the discussion on professional socialization of social workers: '*thinking and performing like a social worker, development of the professional self, and characteristic forms of teaching and learning'* (Larrison & Korr, 2013, p. 195). Let us reflect on each of these three components or the aspects of professional socialization.

Thinking and performing like social workers

We have frameworks in the form of code of ethics, values and principles that specify basic standards for us to think and perform like social workers. Although it is often stated that social work is a value based profession (and not value-free), we need to respond to the following question in our every day work: do the core values of social work, such as, respect for persons, social justice and professional integrity (AASW, 2010), drive our search for knowledge and our interventions or practice? Social work principles, such as the ones promoted and followed by IFSW[1] and IASSW[2] are drawn from these core values. I align with Mukherjee (1977, p. 233) in her view that '*without values, social work methods are not only ineffective, but there is no reason why they should be tried at all*.'

However, how are the values and principles of social work ensured in practice? Let us take an example of one of the principles- *Principle of Individualization***.** In simple terms, it reminds us to not assume that one solution applies to everyone. What is it that people need? The answers to this can be many and may not be exactly same for everyone we work with. This also became evident in the in the post Tsunami phase. On December 26, 2004, more than five

[1] International Federation of Social Workers
[2] International Association of Schools of Social Work

million lives were impacted by the Tsunami that struck many countries along the Indian Ocean. In India, Tamil Nadu was the most affected state. In Tamil Nadu, many organizations came and distributed boats and nets in the coastal villages. While, we may assume that everyone in coastal community is involved in fishing, this may not be true for each and every person in the community. Someone might have been a laborer and might have lost the tools for work. He may not consider fishing as his primary skill set and hence may not be able to utilize the distributed boats and nets effectively. It is also important to monitor ripple effects of interventions. The number of boats significantly increased as compared to what existed before the tsunami. Hence, people faced difficulty in finding labour. As a result, younger boys were increasingly being involved in fishing. This potential of increased risk of child labour due to the shortage of labour for the vast number of boats was being overlooked (Saarthak, 2006). Hence, even while looking at or responding to specific needs, a person has to be understood in conjunction with family and community. An intervention with a person has to be planned keeping in mind the direct and indirect impacts on him/her, on other people in the family and sometimes, other people in the community as well. This reminds us that sometimes the impact of well-intentioned interventions can be harmful or unhelpful as well.

As the example above suggests, our practice needs to be based on social work principles, which in turn are based on the core social work values. Social justice, as the core value, should be used to guide us in reviewing how some well-intentioned interventions can become useful or harmful. This has also been emphasised by Bisman (2004) who states that '*for social work to have a future, the profession must take pride in its moral core'* (p. 109) and considers focus on social justice as an integral part, without which social work may not actually be needed. Focus on social justice has been considered an important value for social workers in India as well due to the prevalence of social injustice in several forms(Mukherjee, 1977). Raising the question whether knowledge and skills attained by social workers are of any use without values and morality, Bisman (2004, p. 115) also states that '*it is the application of knowledge and skills towards moral ends that imbues the profession with meaning and defines the role of the social worker in society*.' The same emphasis echoes in Tylor's (1999, p. 100) statement as he writes: '*to remain viable as a profession, the values which have traditionally been espoused by social work must remain in a central, prominent position within the profession.'*

Therefore, in thinking and performing like social workers, values, principles, knowledge as well as skills- all are important. However, with such a singificant emphasis on core values of social work profession (such as social justice), it is important to reflect on the extent to which it is transferred to students and then visible in their practice. Role of teaching and learning hence is being discussed in a later section.

Development of the professional self

Professional development is a process that continues throughout one's journey as

a student and later as a professional. According to Larrison and Korr (2013, p. 201) '*the professional self is continually reassessed and evolves, as new practice knowledge, skills, and awareness become integrated into the person of the practitioner'*. Hence, we do not work with the assumptions that no solutions exist for various social problems, or that world is still at the same stage or in the same state that we might have studied many years ago. The world evolves, and so do the perspectives and the language. For example, the term 'disability' is generally mistaken as a synonym of what a person cannot do because of a medical condition. However, perspectives have moved on from medical model of disability or considering persons with disabilities as dependent invalids, handicapped, special, etc. What we need to know now is the UN Convention on rights of persons with disabilities (UNCRPD) and how it should influence our policies, laws and everyday lives of people with disabilities around us. We have to increase our knowledge on changing the processes and environment so that people with disability can participate fully and effectively. Similarly, we need to understand that psychosocial interventions is not just counseling. It is more of an integrated approach with ensuring access to multi-layered support systems at various levels- basic services and security, family and community support, non specialized and specialized services (IASC, 2007). Everyone in the community will not need medicines and counseling. Access to information and other services is also an important part of psychosocial support and services. These are just a few examples to emphasize that we need to continuously evolve as social workers (whether educators or field practitioners), i.e., development of the professional self is an ongoing process.

Teaching and learning

Let us begin with the belief that *'the learning experience for the social work students should be interesting, stimulating and thought-provoking'* (Chan & Ng, 2004, p. 314). This belief should be guiding our work as educators and in designing curriculum for social work students. Generally, teaching and learning in social work involves two broad aspects: the process and content of what fieldwork offers to students; and what educators do or can do. Let us look at both these aspects.

The first aspect, i.e., field education or fieldwork is considered as signature pedagogy of social work. Typically, fieldwork involves placing students within NGOs or other institutions working on the issues of social development and welfare, or in communities. With supervision from faculty and staff/personnel at the placement agency, it is expected that fieldwork experience would offer students with opportunities to apply their theoretical knowledge and skills while following social work values and principles; learn about social realities; engage with systems that address various social problems; and evolve skills related to research, and working with individuals, groups and communities. Larrison and Korr (2013), argue that fieldwork is not the only necessary component of signature pedagogy. Fieldwork, they state, is not unique to social work and is a prominent part of other professional education as well, e.g. teaching, health

services, etc. Moreover, according to Mohan (2015, p. 34), a critical review of the processes of fieldwork supervision suggests how '*students' learning experiences are panoptically monitored'* and how this '*ensures faculty dominance and student acquiescence'*. This implies a doubt over the effectiveness of fieldwork as a learning opportunity because this form of supervision (i.e. of dominance) is evidently neither in alignment with values and goals of profession, nor in alignment with our views on how leanring process should be. Learning outcomes of fieldwork, hence, cannot be isolated from educators' or faculty's teaching and supervision processes. Learning that takes place within classroom and supervision and fieldwork are evidently interrelated, and hence, should be integrated in one's growth as a social work professional.

Hence, the fieldwork as well as the setting of an academic institution is important for professional socialization of social work students as they evolve in terms of their professional values, attitudes and identities. Through a study with social work students and professionals (n=489), Miller (2013) found a strong commitment to social work values among those who reported that social work values had been emphasized in their classes. This brings us to the second broad aspect of teaching and learning, and role of educators.

The second aspect, i.e., the process and content of what educators do or can do, involves - educators performing their role as nurturing mentors, and modeling core values and skills within all their interactions with students and others (as students observe, experience and learn); structured conversations and purposeful dialogues that provide transformative experiences and foster critical thinking among students (Larrison & Korr, 2013). According to Larrison and Korr (2013), use of professional self by the educators is an important aspect of preparing emerging social workers in terms of how they think and perform, and develop their professional identities. Process and level of engagement of educators with their students is obviously an important factor. East and Chambers (2007) discuss some of the principles of teaching offered by Parker Palmer[1] and present these through their experiences as social work educators. One of these principles - 'we teach who we are', is linked with the identity and integrity of educators. This principle seems to emphasize on being role models and on sharing not just the theoretical concepts related to various topics being taught, but also one's own intellectual and emotional passions or excitements associated with those topics. Drawing from Palmer's principles, the importance of modelling openness and integrity by social work educators has also been discussed by Gates (2011) as he reflects on his own experience as LGBTQ social worker and educator. Use of these aspects (modelling openness, integrity, etc.) could be very helpful in cultivating commitment towards core values of social work profession among students.

While we deliberate on the ways of transferring values of social work by educators to students, some important questions need to be answered. Do educators believe that it is their role to ensure alignment of students' practice with

[1] Parker Palmer- a teacher, writer and an activist, has written several books including -The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life

values such as -social justice orientation? What might come in the way of active engagement of educators with their students on aspects of social justice? A qualitative research with 13 social work educators with PhD and at least five years of full time teaching experience in USA throws up some important reflections on this aspect (Funge, 2011). It may be worth exploring whether these are applicable to Indian context as well. In this study, although all respondents affirmed that social justice orientation was important for students, they had varying perspectives on whether social work educators could *ensure* use of this orientation in the practice of students. Some however, did feel that educators could play a role in actively cultivating a conviction among students towards social justice. Some respondents also felt that practice related experience of the faculty also influenced the extent to which they engaged students on issues of social justice. Practice related experience was considered valuable in the context that doctoral studies were not really perceived to be preparing the doctoral students to teach. Level of collaborative dialogue and engagement with colleagues on incorporating social justice as a foundation within the teaching institution was also perceived as a factor that influenced the level of emphasis on social justice in educator-student engagement.

It is important to study or reflect on the relevance of the factors discussed by Funge (2011) in the Indian context as well. It is also important to not overlook various ways in which social media may be increasingly influencing perspectives of social work students, professionals as well as educators. Educators and professionals, one might assume, are better equipped to balance the outside influences with their own research/fact finding and applying social work values and principles to judge or respond to each opinion or story that is shared in social media. But how far is this assumption true? And are social work educators actively engaged in countering the influence of all those opinions (shared on social media) that do not align with social work values? For example, in the debates on presence of tolerance or intolerance in India, or in presence of voices that equate opinions against government with anti-nationalism - what do educators perceive their role to be? Do they remain neutral? Do they share their views on the basis of social justice or injustice present in India and engage proactively with students on these issues? Or do they consider these issues/discussions as part of personal domain and hence do not really think of bringing them up in the classrooms? Social justice as our core value does not really allow educators to remain silent spectators and instead should encourage everyone to engage in discussions with students in a manner that enhances commitment towards social work values and principles, instead of always keeping personal-professional division between what can or cannot be discussed in classrooms.

Building on Brij Mohan's work on social justice and social work education, Hodge (2010) has discussed guidelines to operationlize a social justice pedagogy in educational settings. One of these is principles - epistemic pluralism (drawn from Brij Mohan's work) which proposes how different groups may have different perspectives, which need to be included and respected. Operationalizing this principle in our everyday language and pratice can involve following strategies (Hodge, 2011):

- use of self-descriptors, i.e. using phrases that groups use for themsleves instead of imposing labels on them;
- avoiding ideological modifiers which further marginalise the groups through labels such as 'conservative muslim', 'fundamentalist muslim' etc. and instead use only self-descriptior i.e. 'muslim' in this case;
- depicting understandings of social justice fairly in terms of how the efforts to foster a just society are framed- this means that it is not helpful to impose personal values on others (e.g. through bans on specific eating habits) by labelling an act negative on some occasions, while on other occasions using the logic of greater common good for other efforts- such as school admission policies;
- shunning negative associations with groups which leads to 'othering', for example, associating terrorism with muslims, or associating hindus with being anti-muslim; and
- emphasizing strengths rather than deficits- although it is easy to focus on negative or questionable activties of various groups.

While these are only a few strategies of applying the value of social justice in our everyday language/practice, we need to obviously engage with these and many more ways/practices with more depth. We have to make efforts towards recognizing nuances that demonstrate our alignment as well as our deviation from social work values. Considering that values and ethics are the base of social work profession, Mukherjee (1977, p. 227) emphasised that orientation to these, hence, should be 'one of the primary goals of social work education'. However, as preaching is not an effective method of instilling values, Mukherjee (1977, p. 228) suggested that values can be illustrated with the help of practitioners as '*a teacher in a social work institution need not necessarily be the best example of a practitioner of the profession*.' Hence, the question that now stands in front of social work educators is this: how far do we agree, now, with this perspective that educators cannot be best examples as practitioners? Is the practitioner-educator gap in skills and perspectives really this wide at present? And what do we need to do about this gap as educators, if the gap is really very wide? Of course, we cannot deny the fact that practitioners and educators- both groups are engaged in enhancing learning of a social work student and this must continue to happen. Let us discuss this further through a real example.

Engagement with social justice in University's neighbourhood: An Example

In early 2015, a faculty at the Department of Social Work (in a Central University) received a phone call in evening from someone in need. This person, in his desperation for help, had somehow got access to the faculty's phone number and called up for help in dealing with problems with a reputed private Hospital (located near the University). This was faculty's first contact with this person. He said that his brother, a person with disability, was admitted to the hospital in emergency due to several fits/seizures that occurred in a short span of time. His brother's regular treatment was going in with a doctor in another

hospital but in emergency, they wanted to reach the nearest hospital as soon as possible. And this is what brought them to this reputed private hospital. His brother (a person with disability) had no source of income. As the Hospital raised bill of an amount, which could not have been afforded by the family, he requested hospital for discharging the person (his brother). Hospital agreed for his brother's 'leave against medical advice' but did not allow the patient to leave hospital till the bill of over 1 lakh was settled. In this period (after 'leave against medical advice'), he was not being given solid food or the treatment required. The person requested and advocated with every person who could listen to him at the Hospital but that did not help.

The faculty member, on receiving this call, initiated contact with a few other members at the Department for possible suggestions. This did not lead to any immediate action. Then, the faculty along with a student reached the hospital at night, met the person, and after this the negotiations and discussions continued with various people till after midnight.

From the point when the faculty member received phone call (in evening) till midnight, she was in touch with a research scholar and an NGO working on rights and issues of persons with disabilities. The NGO provided continuous support by sharing suggestions with faculty, and by speaking with the person as well as doctors at the hospital. While scholars of this Department also explored and shared potential helpful information, the NGO was able to get the faculty member in touch with a senior doctor at the hospital who provided the best extent of support possible. Finally, the person could get discharged the next day and his bill was reduced by 40 thousand.

Reflections based on the example

At one level, the example shared in previous section shows how an educator, students, and an NGO jointly responded to the need of a person who had faced injustice. In a way, this suggests that social work educators can take on the practitioner role when needed and how solution to problems can be found through collaboration.

However, this example also brings up a few discomforting facts: the person with disability without a source of income would fall in below-poverty-line category and should be considered as a vulnerable person. But this did not seem to convince Hospital Administration adequately to reduce or waive off his fee earlier or even later. The hospital, instead, had decided to keep the patient without nutrition and treatment for a significant period of the day. This raises some important questions for us:

- Are we ready with adequate information and protocols to respond as an Institution, or as a Department, or as a faculty when someone from community approaches for help?
- Do Hospitals in the vicinity of an influential institution like a Central University- do enough (or even what is mandatory) for vulnerable groups? Within the University itself, there would be several students who would not be able to afford the cost of hospitalization in emergency in the

hospitals such as this reputed private hospital. What should be the University's response in such cases?

- Apart from running courses, conducting researches, does a University see its role in making a more influential impact on other institutions in its vicinity? Or does it leave that work on the shoulders of various NGOs- who are anyway doing their best to reach out to as many people with often-limited resources that they have? Generally, Central Universities have community outreach programmes. Do they proactively focus on change in the institutions that are used by community?
- How are we really linking academics with practice? How do various Departments and Centers of Universities coordinate with each other and the voluntary sector to do the best they can –together towards social justice and making the environment accessible for all?

I believe it is important for educators to raise these questions. I am sure, however, that these questions are not new. I am sure these occur to anyone who faces problems with health or any other systems in their context. I am also sure that most Universities would have adequate faculty, and scholars to jointly find solutions, and advocate for change. From this view, it seems logical for social work educators to '*adopt a holistic practitioner-researcher- educator role in their everyday practice in order to create the necessary impact to effect change*' (Chan & Ng, 2004, p. 312). As effective educators, we have to practice what we preach. And to do so, we have to be '*competent in practice, effective in research utilization, as well as innovative in teaching and learning. We have to create a reflective environment for students to develop an attitude of zero tolerance to injustice and exploitation*' (Chan & Ng, 2004, p. 315).

The educator, hence, is not just responsible for what transpires within classroom but should also be seen as taking initiatives in terms of practice as well as research. The knowledge and skill gap, between educators and field-based practitioners, needs to reduce. This, however, does not mean that social work professionals/practitioners should not be engaged in the process of students' professional socialization. That must continue. Instead, my emphasis here is on what needs to be done by educators so that they are engaged in both aspects: taking onus of bringing change in our society, and being role models for students in terms of actions/practice.

Conclusion

In terms of creating/facilitating learning experiences for social work students, focus of institutions has to be on learning through both- fieldwork, as well as interactions within classroom and beyond with educators. It is also evident that we must move towards being educators-researchers-practitioners in our everyday practice. Educators have to not only reflect on effectiveness of their classroom teaching practices, but also on how they portray themselves as role models in everyday interactions with students, and how they are transferring commitment towards social justice and other core values of social work profession. Social work educators and field practitioners themselves too have be

committed towards core values of this profession while updating themselves regarding ever-evolving knowledge and practice. Unless we reflect, critique ourselves and our processes as educators everyday, and move towards change, we run the risk of proving the following statements by Mohan (2015, p.31) to be true everyday: '*Social work contemporary pedagogy is fundamentally anti-intellectual. Supervisory idolatry has marked the death of dissent in a supposedly liberating field*.' Proving this to be true is evidently not in our interest as social work educators and institutions.

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SOCIAL WORK JOURNAL
(BI-ANNUAL)
ISSN 0976-5484
6 (1) January–June 2015, pp. 45–60

From Functional to Social Justice Stance: A Review of Social Work Approaches

Ronald Yesudhas

The quest for a unified conceptual framework for social work practice has resulted in the development of models such as the 'Person in Environment' and 'Integrated Social Work Practice' models. Though these models provide a broad frame of reference, they have been criticized for promoting a system maintenance approach. In this milieu, the rise of social justice approaches has been seen as both organic and substantial given the socio-economic contexts. The author presents these countering approaches and gives a clarion call for developing practice models based on subaltern realities.

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Introduction

Be it law, medicine or nursing, all professions are guided by a cohesive theoretical and scientific body of knowledge. This enables the professionals to develop proper practice frameworks which can be reviewed at periodic intervals. Social work does not have a separate theory. But social workers try to use various other social science theories in practice. This is important because if practice is uninformed by theory, it becomes irrelevant.

The need to develop a common conceptual framework for social work practice is felt by the educators as well as the practitioners, as it provides a structure for analyzing complex and often highly emotional human problems and situations. Conceptual framework also provides a rationale for action and decision making in the field situation. They promote a systematic, orderly, and predictable approach to work with people.

The quest for a unified conceptual framework for social work practice has helped in the formulation of approaches such as the Person-in-Environment (PiE), the Integrated Social Work Practice (ISWP) model, etc. These models which are heavily based on systems approach are critiqued by various scholars for taking a

"structural-functional" stance, thereby putting the onus on people for the problems. The social justice approaches juxtapose the systems models, and give due weightage to the social and economic structures which create problems. Human rights, stakeholder participation and creative intervention methods are core to the social justice approaches.

The objective of this paper is twofold :-

a. To provide an overview of Integrated Social Work Practice (ISWP) model based on the systems theories.
b. To counter the dominant model and introduce the readers to the alternative paradigm, consisting of several Social Justice approaches.

Systems Thinking and Social Work

In social work, systems thinking have been influenced by the work of biologist Ludwin von Bertalanfyy, psychologist Uri Brofenbrenner and sociologist Talcott Parsons.

Talcott Parsons, a sociologist used the systems thinking/ idea to develop a framework referred as "Structural- Functionalism" or the Human Actions and Social Systems Theory. According to the theory, a human person is considered as a system. There are several sub-systems in that whole, namely the behavioural organism, personality system, social system and cultural system. These sub-systems are related to different functions, namely adaptation, goal attainment/ growth, integration and latency.

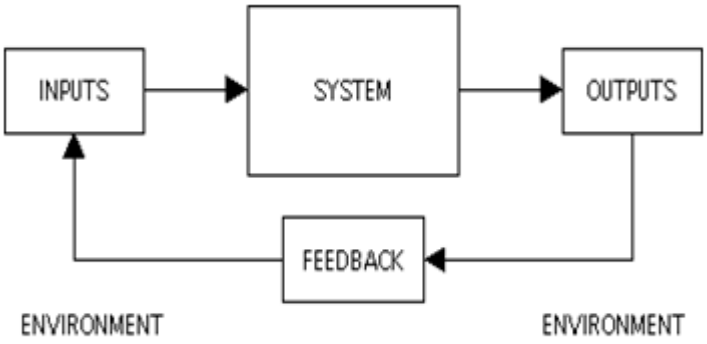
Adaptation is a dynamic process in which a system responds to the demands and pressures of the external forces and conditions. Similarly, the system determines and prioritizes its goals and then obtains and mobilises resources in directed action to achieve those goals. This is the function of *goal attainment*. The third concept is *integration*, which describes the coordination and orchestration of the system's internal components. *Latency* (also called as pattern maintenance) describes a system state in which it is invested in maintaining and transmitting its norms and values.

Ludwin von Bertalanfyy developed a General Systems Theory (GST) which equally provides a useful framework for social work practice. Bertalanfyy believed that all things could be regarded as systems. In the GST, each system is a unit of wholeness with a distinct property or structural limitation that delineates it from other systems. This is called system's *boundary*. The boundary is what makes each system unique and gives it definition. Some boundaries are clearly *defined*; others may be *permeable*.

The boundaries of social systems can be partially defined by norms and customs. For example, groups are social organizations which define their boundary through group membership. Through this process, it is possible to see that each system has a characteristic boundary and way of defining itself. These invisible boundaries also regulate how individuals enter and exit the system.

A system grows through an exchange of energy between the sub-systems and its environment, a process that is possible only if the boundary possesses permeability. The amount of energy that is permitted to pass through a given

system's boundary determines the permeability of that boundary. The more permeable the boundary, the greater the extent of interaction that the system has with its environment, thus leading to greater openness.



In the context of exchange of energy between the system and its environment, here are two types of systems, namely open and closed systems. An open system, unlike a closed system, exchanges matter with its environment. A closed system on the other hand is isolated from their environment. As we have understood, openness is a critical quality for system functioning and survival. However, there are other times when a system closes itself as a perceived means of protecting itself. In these instances, the system is exporting (system outputs) more energy than it is able to import. Since systems rely on a flow of energy, with outputs relying on fresh inputs, too much exporting can lead to a state of disorder, referred to as *entropy.* When the system is importing more than it is exporting, it is termed *negative entropy,* or *negentropy,* a state of system growth.

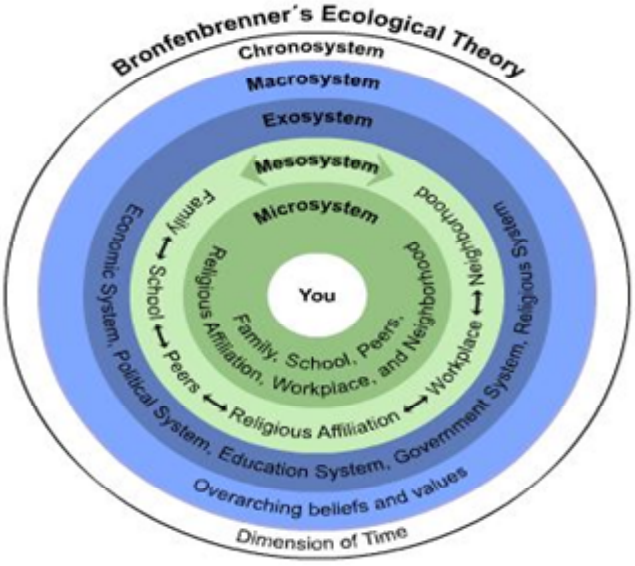
The exchange of information between the system and its environment is regulated by a process called *feedback.* It determines whether the system's *outputs* are consonant with the perceived *outcomes* (goals) that the system has established for itself. If the system perceives a variance between output and outcome, it can alter the process by varying the level of inputs.

From the social work point of view, an open system is considered as a functional system, while a closed system is seen as dysfunctional. A functional system interacts dynamically with the larger environment, a need that supports the survival of the system.

If a system is working properly, it would achieve a form of dynamic equilibrium with the environment that he called *steady state.* Furthermore, the ability of the system to adapt to its environment, through changes in its structure leads to states of *equilibrium* and *homeostasis.* The former concept, equilibrium is the sense of being in balance. When something is in balance, there is little variability in movement before the state of balance is disrupted. On the other hand, the latter, that is, homeostasis is a state of variable balance where the limits to maintaining balance are more flexible.

Ecological Theory: A Frame of Reference for Social Work Model Building

The ecological theory was developed by Urie Brofenbrenner. He believed that a person's development is affected by everything in their surrounding environment. He divided the person's environment into five different levels: the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exo-system, the macro-system, and the chronosystem.



The microsystem is the system closest to the person and the one in which they have direct contact. For example in the life of Ram (a child studying in a school), his microsystem would be his home or school. The next level is the mesosystem.

The mesosystem consists of the interactions between the different parts of a person's microsystem. The mesosystem is where a person's individual microsystems do not function independently, but are interconnected and assert influence upon one another. These interactions have an indirect impact on the individual. One aspect of Ram's mesosystem would be the relationship between his parents and his teacher. His parents may take an active role in his school, such as attending parents–teachers association meetings regularly. This has a positive impact on the development of the child because the different elements of his microsystem are working together.

The exo-system is the next level. The exo-system refers to a setting that does not involve the person as an active participant, but still affects them. This includes decisions that have bearing on the person, but in which they have no participation in the decision-making process. Ram's wellbeing is affected by his father receiving a promotion at work or losing his job. Macro-system encompasses the

cultural environment in which the person lives. It includes the socio-political beliefs, socioeconomic status, poverty, and ethnicity. All these factors have a major role in the life of the child. Lastly, the chronosystem includes major life transitions, environmental events and historical events that occur during development process. The specific incidents tend to change how the child interacts with all the rest of the system. Ecological theory helps us in developing social work models as it serves as a frame of reference to engage/ enhance/ and develop grand models of practice in social work.

Person-in-Environment Model in Social Work

Utilizing the Ecological Theory and the General Systems Theory, Germain (1991) developed the Person-in-Environment (PiE) Model**.** He strongly advocated for looking at the bio-psychosocial development of individuals and families within cultural, historical, communal, and societal contexts, a perspective that requires us to look as well at all the events in the person's life. She characterized the nature of relationships between systems as "reciprocal exchanges between entities, or between their elements, in which each changes or otherwise influences the other over time" (ibid., p. 16).

Germain (1991) rightly identifies adaptation, life stress, coping, power, and human relatedness as important concepts for understanding the nature of the interactions of person-in-environment.

Adaptation is the act/ process of changing oneself in order to meet environmental opportunities or demands, in response to human needs, rights, goals, and capacities. Person-in-environment interaction leads to a normal tension, also referred to as *life stress*. Whenever different entities interact with each other, the ebb and flow between them creates some friction. In other words, two people in exactly the same environmental situation may have different experiences owing to their differing perceptions of that situation.

The next concept is coping. The ability to cope requires both problem solving skills and the ability to regulate negative feelings. The outcome of these factors leads to increased self-esteem, which helps diminish the negative feelings caused by a particular stressor.

Power has its derivation from a source extrinsic to the individual. Dominant groups in society use their position of power to influence subordinate groups through transactions in which resources are either provided or withheld. The abuse of power by a dominant group can also be a source of tension in person–environment interactions. These tensions affect whole segments of the population, not just one individual. How the individual experiences this tension and is able to adapt to the tension-producing situation determines that individual's capacity for negotiating power inequities and imbalances. Paramount in the concept of person-in-environment is the individual's ability to develop purposeful and meaningful relationships and attachments with oneself and the others.

Emergence of Integrated Social Work Practice (ISWP) Model in India

Systems theories provide a grand framework integrating every dimension of social work as a whole. It helps social workers to understand the interactions between individuals, groups, organizations, communities, government, larger social systems, and their environments. This understanding helped in the emergence of the "integrated approach". Some of the prominent authors during the 1970s and 80s who worked on this idea include, Pincus & Minahan (1973); Siporin (1975); Germain & Gitterman (1980); and Meyer (1983).

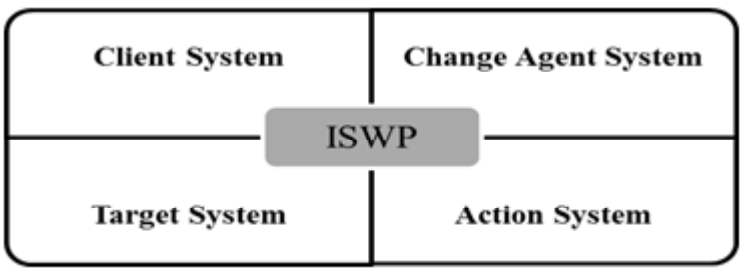
Pincus and Minahan created an integrated approach of social work practice as they felt the limitations of describing social work according to its traditional three divisions, namely casework, group work and community organization, which they felt were not sufficient. They defined social work as having a common base of knowledge, values and skills for professional social workers in any organization that delivers services to people in any field of practice (Pincus & Minahan, 1973).

The integrated approach is rested on a central theme in which the performance of the life tasks and the interaction between people and their network of resource systems is vital. The integrated approach is crucial in the generic model of social work education currently in vogue in many schools of social work in India.

According to Nadkarni (1997), the first Indian social work educator to introduce integrated approach in India was Dr. Armaity Desai, former Chairperson of the UGC, who was then the Vice-Principal of College of Social Work, Nirmala Niketan, in Mumbai. In 1973 (around the same time when Pincus and Minahan were busy evolving their model), she introduced a course titled Integrated Social Work Practice (ISWP) with theory and a seminar part to enable students to apply the social work concepts to their practice.

The ISWP framework is based on the assumption that "person" and the "environment" are two ends of a transaction that needs to be connected, leading to identification and defining of social/ development problems which helps in mobilising appropriate resources to solve the issues at hand. There are four systems involved in the change effort in the ISWP Framework, namely the client system, change agent system, target system, and action system.

Fig 1: ISWP Framework



Client system refers to the individuals and group who are beneficiaries of the change process/ services either directly or indirectly. The change agent system refers to the social work centre/organisation that facilitates social work practice. Target system refers to people who need to be changed or influenced to accomplish the goals of change effort. It includes individuals and groups who may or may not benefit from the change, but their participation in crucial for the success of the intervention. It has to be understood that the relationship between the change agent system and the target system is bargaining in nature as there may be resistance for change from the target system. Action system comprises of all those systems the change agent works with to achieve the goals [of the change effort]. The client and the target system ought to be influenced to join the change effort as action system.

Dr. Vimla (1997) had developed a monograph on ISWP to help students understand the usefulness of the framework based on her own "action research" with the *Jari Mari* Community in Mumbai. The monograph is based on Jagruti Kendra's (a NGOs) intervention in the field of garbage pollution.

Identification of the Four Systems

*(Note: **The case in based on the narrative of the author as it stood in 1997)*

Jari Mari slum community (Client System) has a population above 50,000. Most of the shanties in the community are illegal and face threats of eviction and harassment on regular basis. There are not enough facilities and basic amenities related to water, electricity, toilets or drainage. Some owners of the shanties use threats of eviction and legal action to keep interferences at bay to the extent of not even allowing their tenants to improve their living conditions. Most of the people in the community are migrants hailing from Karnataka, Madya Pradesh, Tamilnadu and Kerela. The family system is the primary coping unit ensuring the steady state. The families rely on the landlords to provided leadership in the community. On the other hand, the youth and mahila mandals provide alternative subsystem for coping the disruptive stimuli and maintaining dynamic equilibrium. Jagruti Kendra (Change Agent System) is a local NGO working in the area. It has personnel trained in community development, social work, and law. The methods used by the change agent system includes mass education, formation of action system of pertinent issues, initiating action, etc. Community organisation and social action strategies were also used. The output of the system is establishment of several women's groups, youth groups, networking, etc. The community in general, mahila mandals, and youth associations (Target System) are the one who need to understand and participate in the programmes of the Change Agent System, i.e., the NGO. The Change Agent System, i.e., the NGO works with all the three other systems in order to create the desired change. Trainers, community animators, members of the mandals/ associations, and the community at large (Action System) create the desired change.

In the ISWP model, a set of systematic series of actions ought to be developed to bring about a particular result, end, or condition. The outcome goals

envisaged by the social worker seek to end a condition which requires change. The outcome goals in the project includes (a) development of better understanding of the environmental issue [of pollution] by the target system, (b) having agreed to form the action system, the target system will prepare to initiate some change on the issue of pollution in the area. Stages in making changes include the following:

a. Initial Phase:

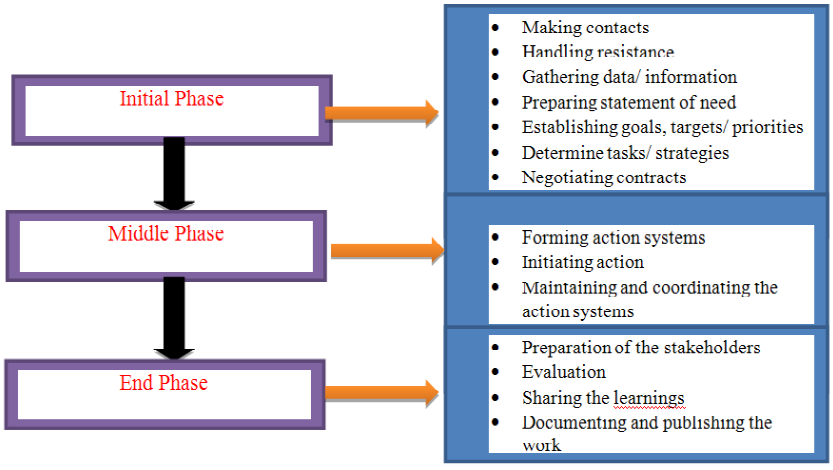
During the initial phase, social workers make contacts in the community and prepare the community for the change process. In the due course, they handle resistance from dominant elements in the community. Once the resistance is peacefully/ tactfully handled, data can be obtained in the community regarding the particular issue. Based on the data, statement of need, goals, targets and strategies can be prepared. Finally, an oral/ written contract can be developed based on which intervention can start.

b. Middle Phase

In the middle (field intervention) phase, one of the main tasks is to form action systems and initiate action. Maintaining and coordinating the action systems is also crucial during this phase.

c. End Phase

In the end phase, proper preparation of the stakeholders must be done to carry over the project. Evaluation can be done to assess the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the project in the community. It is a good idea to even publish about the project/ change theory so that others can also learn from the project.



(Adapted from Nadkarni 1997)

Critique of Functional/ Systems Perspective

Hutchison and Charlesworth (2007), point out the circumstances behind the influence of system perspectives in the following manner:

> The social workers who first adopted the systems perspective were heavily influenced by functionalist sociology, which was the dominant sociological theory during the 1940s and 1950s. In functionalism, social systems are thought to be orderly and remain in a relatively stable state, also known as homeostasis or equilibrium. Each part of the system serves an essential function in maintaining the system, and the functions of the various parts are coordinated to produce a well-functioning whole. System processes and structures such as rules and roles serve to maintain system stability. Although this systems approach did not deny the possibility of system change, it was more concerned with the mechanisms of system maintenance and stability (p. 39).

The system perspective was influential within the practitioners groups as well as with the social work educators. However, since the 1980s, there have been extensive debates within the social work fraternity on the tenacity of the systems theory, leading to conflicts between the "clinical" and "social action" oriented groups.

According to Howe (1987), the functionalists are only interested in maintaining orderly relationship in the society. He critiques that a functionalist social worker perceives his/her role as part of social constabularies maintaining order by keeping an eye on social mechanisms to deal with deviance. So, any anti-establishment behaviour is treated immediately as it disturbs the equilibrium. The functionalist social worker therefore spent all their time in diagnosing and treating the individual behaviour creating the problem, and work out a strategy for treatment which finally leads to maintenance of the existing system. This model has been heavily criticised by progressive social workers. Hutchison and Charlesworth (2007) summarise the point, "Social workers have become dissatisfied with the systems perspective on two counts. First, the perspective was seen as too abstract and, second, the emphasis on stability seemed too conservative for a profession devoted to social change" (p. 39).

Approaches under Social Justice Umbrella in Social Work

Social justice is a primary value and function of *social work*. It is a perspective which stresses that everyone deserves equal economic, political, and social rights and opportunities. Social workers with a social justice stance aim to open the doors of access and opportunity for everyone, particularly those in greatest need.

Social justice approaches juxtapose the functionalist paradigm in social work. There are various practice approaches which comes under the social justice umbrella in social work. Some of the prominent approaches include (a) Radical Social Work; (b) Critical Social Work; (c) Anti- Racist Social Work; (d) Anti-Oppressive Social Work; and (e) Anti-Caste Social Work.

Radical Social Work

Marxian literature suggests that the current uncertainties and insecurities faced

by people are due to the crisis of capitalism. When social workers face victims of economic and political structures, they can't be shying away from the fact that social work is 'not neutral'. They need to believe that social work is a 'political process'.

The radical social workers' part in the capitalist economy context is very important as the clients are mostly unaware of public dimension of their problems (that is, the structural-political process). Hence the role the radical social worker is to create public awareness, and unite people within the labour movement and trade unions.

At the macro level, the radical social workers see their role in challenging the budget cuts of state due to current neoliberal policies. The radical social workers believe that the welfare state is a result of working class struggle and welfare is the price paid by the state for political security. Hence radical social workers protest against the welfare cuts of the government in key areas such as health, education, infrastructure, etc.

Similarly, with in the profession, radical social workers oppose the social control function of the traditional/functionalist social workers. They challenge the role of social workers in legitimization of social structure and inequalities. Countering the hegemony, radical social workers create a culture of collective decision making by focusing on de-hierarchism. They lay less emphasis on techniques, but focus on developing analytical framework to see the structural bottlenecks.

Radical social workers unite all consumers of welfare and help in strengthening informed opinion making on welfare needs of people. They therefore involve in community politics, and advocate for policy change in the system through helping individuals locate personal issues in the macro socio-political structures (Howe, 1987).

There are two types of radicals, namely consciousness raisers and revolutionaries (Howe, 1987). The consciousness raisers view that it is the dehumanizing character of the modern society which leads to the socio-economic problems. Modern society alienates people from each other and people are not conscious of how the socio-economic system distorts their essential being. Hence consciousness raisers aid people in analysing personal trouble in a socio-political context and finally help them to become aware and take control of their lives. An example of their work is the consciousness raising of traditional sanitation workers belonging to a particular caste group in India.

Revolutionaries believe that the means of production in the hands of few (ruling class) should be challenged, as it leads to accumulation of capital. Labour power of working class is required for generation of wealth. Hence the ruling class utilizes the labour of the working class. However, only a small portion of their value for labour is received at the end of the day. The surplus value is appropriated by owners. The ruling class also uses the apparatus of 'state' (police, court and prison) to suppress dissent. To counter capitalism and the state, revolutionaries work in two ways. The pragmatic revolutionaries work with-in the system to alter laws and policies affecting the working class. The hard core radicals on the other hand, work outside the system and tend to work on

overthrowing the state.

Critical Social Work

Critical social work is based on the radical formulation of 1960s. It challenges domination and oppression of all forms – structural, interpersonal, and personal. Critical social workers believe that false consciousness block the idea that social relations and structures are constructed, and therefore changeable. Hence the role of social workers is to create a culture of self-reflection and interaction (Fook, 2003).

There are two perspectives within the critical social work tradition, namely structural (Marxian) & post-structural (Foucauldian). While the former empathizes that social structure determines class/power, the latter perceives that there are multiple ways in which power can be created and maintained. Recently, Fook (2003) has made an attempt at combining the approaches. However, there is a feeling among Marxian followers that post-structural analysis may obstruct social workers in creating social change.

Feminist Social Work

As a matter of fact, it's mostly women who dominate basic grades of paid professionals. However, there is a glass ceiling if they aspire to reach beyond. Women's job is mostly considered as home based and 'care' work. Thus women are mostly restricted to private sphere and are excluded from public sphere. This public–private divide is central to feminist conceptualization of social problems. There are several stands of feminism (liberal, radical, Marxist/ socialist, black, postmodern) and the resultant *modus operandi* (Dominelli, 2002).

Liberal feminist cherish the values of independence and equal opportunities. They attack unjust/ gender biased educational/employment policies and demand for inclusion in respective spheres. They believe that men can be involved in women's struggles. The limitation of this stand is that it does not challenge basic power structures. Moreover, gendered division of labour and private patriarchy are left unchallenged.

Radical feminist see systemic subjugation of women by men. They believe that men control reproductive capacities of women and use violence to tame them. They are principally 'anti-men' and advocate women to live separately or live with women (lesbian feminism). Marxist/ socialist feminist believe that capitalism, as well as the public and private patriarchy should be challenged as it's through these socio-economic forms of power men control women. Marxist/ socialist feminist find masculinity as a problem rather than men *per se*, and are open to work with men. They problematize 'family' by unmasking the sanctity of marriage.

Black feminist are cautious of the white feminist. They argue that racism is evident within white feminist scholarship. Black feminism is based on African contribution to history of civilizations. African identity and black people's strength are emphasized in the approach. Unlike other feminists, black feminist give

importance to family and extended kinship. They find strengths in "mothering". Postmodern feminist challenge the homogeneous representation of women and rejects the metanarratives of the patriarchal structures as it undermines the systematic patterns of discrimination. They believe that it decontextualizes the individual and turns him/her in to an apolitical being. Other feminists argue that postmodern feminism is more rhetorical rather than practical.

Feminist social workers use feminist theory to guide their practice. They believe that division of women's lives in to public and private domains is the main problem. Feminist social workers question the functionalist on their 'confidential' and status quo approach while handling abuse and violence. Feminist social workers convert private troubles in to public issues, thereby deconstructing the category 'women'. The emphasis is on strengths-based practice (egalitarian approach) which lays emphasis on taking action consistent with empowerment of self.

Anti- Racist Social Work

Racism occurs at three distinct spheres, namely personal, institutional and cultural spheres. Personal racism includes individual prejudice and activities that deny certain group of people dignity. Institutional racism are due to unjust public policies and pathologising. Cultural racism occurs every day through language, religion, etc. Anti-racist social work emerged to counter racism at all three levels.

Anti-racist social work is a political commitment to eradicate racial oppression. Anti-racist social worker should understand eight cyclic problems, namely denial, omission, avoidance, de-contextualization, colour-blindness, patronizing, exaggeration and dumping (Dominelli, 2008). Denial refers to the outright rejection of the privileged class vis-à-vis the existence of racism. Omission refers to ignoring racial dimensions of social relations. Avoidance refers to the act of avoiding confrontation with people of power who believe in race. De-contextualization is the artful deceit of powerful people by conceptualizing social relations in vacuum devoid of power. Colour-blind approach is a tokenistic, like awarding honorary white status on the oppressed. Patronizing is creating a myth that white superior is tolerant. Exaggeration is magnifying the minimum done towards the weaker ones and dumping refers to the notion that the weaker ones should solve their own problems. According to Dominelli (2008), anti-racist social work can be practised by organizing/ following several steps, namely:-

- Resisting to and countering racism
- Eradicating racist social relations
- Tackling racist practices at personal and collective levels
- Forging partnership and alliances with likeminded global organisations.
- Questioning: how and why a profession dedicated to people's wellbeing (social work) oppresses black people
- Promoting human rights and citizenship based practices

Anti-Oppressive Social Work

Oppression takes place when a person acts or a policy is enacted unjustly against an individual, or group because of their affiliation to certain group. Anti-Oppressive Social Work (AOSW) practice emerges from social movements and is aimed at transforming political, economic, and cultural factors generating inequality/ injustice.

According to Baines (2011), there are ten basic premises on which AOSW is built. They are as follows:

- Social work is a contested and highly political practice.
- Social work is not a neutral, caring profession, but an active political process.
- The primary role of social workers is to assist individuals, at the same time they have the responsibility of transforming the society.
- Macro and micro social relations generate oppression (social structure to every day practices).
- Everyday experience is shaped by multiple oppressions (gender, class, etc.).
- Social workers need to build allies and work with social movements.
- Theoretical and practical development in social work must be based on struggles of people and needs of those who are oppressed and marginalized.
- Participatory approach is necessary in the interaction between the between clients and practitioners in order to be anti-oppressive in stance.
- Self-reflective practice and on-going social analysis are essential qualities of an anti-oppressive social worker.
- Anti-oppressive social work advocates for a blended, heterodox approach with emphasis on politicized and transformative social work practice.

Anti-oppressive social workers work with-in, and against the state. They avoid taking managerial positions because of social justice stance. The emergent model within AOSW is addressing immediate crisis and pain, while keeping the bigger picture in mind.

Anti- Caste Social Work

Caste system prevalent in South Asia, particularly in India is based on principles and customary rules that involve the division of people into social groups where assignments of rights are determined by birth and heredity.

The assignment of basic rights among various castes is unequal and hierarchical, with those at the top enjoying most rights coupled with least duties and those at the bottom performing most duties coupled with no rights. The system is maintained through the rigid enforcement of social ostracism in case of any deviations. Thus the doctrine of inequality is the core and heart of the caste system (IDSN, 2010).

Caste based discrimination and exclusion is prevalent in various spheres of our lives in India. In the economic sphere, exclusion is practiced in the labour market, agricultural land market, consumer market, etc. In the civil and cultural spheres, dalits face discrimination and exclusion in the use of public services like

roads, temples, water bodies, and institutions delivering services like education, health, and other public services. In the political sphere, dalits face discrimination in the use of political rights, and in participating in the decision making process (Thorat, 2005).

Social work response to dalit exclusion has been abysmal. Ramaiah (1998), points out that most of the Indian professional social workers conveniently ignore caste. He argues that most professional social workers are inherently caste prejudiced. He suggests that the first thing that social workers need to seriously consider doing is to "de-caste" themselves as no social work practice paradigm could contribute meaningfully and make any real dent on the marginalized till the same is first accomplished (Bodhi, 2014).

To counter caste-based exclusion and discrimination, committed social workers have recently come together to evolve with the Anti-caste social work (ACSW) model. According to Bodhi, anti-caste social work is a politico-theoretical position that rejects the structure of graded inequality based on purity and pollution closely linked to caste and descent" (Bodhi, 2014, p. 36). He challenges the functional approach of social work and proposes an alternative emancipatory paradigm that liberates people from this inhuman and discriminatory system.

Bodhi adds that anti-caste social work is also a "celebration of the strength and resilience of the Dalit Community in withstanding years of oppression and discrimination and using these strengths to re-conceptualize helping professions that would further the process of empowerment. It is a paradigm shift in the identification of causal factors, where the problem is conceived as lying deeply embedded in dominant caste groups/system rather than the excluded caste" (Bodhi 2014: 36). Thus anti-caste social work is contextual and tries to build indigenous knowledgebase for professional practice in India.

Discussion and Conclusion

Social work is a highly contested terrain, vis-à-vis, the nature and the role played by social workers in the society. This context gives rise to the problem of one unified definition of social work. Having grappled with the issue, Thompson (2000, p. 13) suggests a simpler definition, "social work is what social workers do'. This definition highlights the competing and contradictory discourses in social work on the nature and role of social work professionals (Asquith *et al.*, 2005).

The primary question is therefore on the '*function of social work*'. At one level, social work is construed as a profession committed to rights and justice (Clark, 2002). On the other hand, social work is concerned about system maintenance. Here social workers can be seen to be an agent of social control (Davies 1981). Hence the function of social workers is far from addressing the inequalities. In other words, naively or otherwise, social workers can play a paradoxical role in sustaining or perpetuating the very social and economic system which promotes such inequalities. Thus, rather than liberating, social work can be oppressive and for that reason not true to the core values on which it claims to be based (Asquith *et al.*, 2005).

It is therefore necessary to see the growth of social justice approaches in social work in this context. Social justice approaches in social work are not only organic, but also substantial. As we witness major social, economic and technological changes in the society in the recent past, the scope and need for social justice stance seems imminent.

This current situation reminds us to strengthen the value base of social work; develop field based practice models, and the inculcate ideologies /philosophies which are promoting/ highlighting subaltern history and life realities of socially excluded and marginalized communities through development of indigenous field based practice models.

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SOCIAL WORK JOURNAL
(BI-ANNUAL)
ISSN 0976-5484
6 (1) January–June 2015, pp. 61–74

Reflections of Practitioners on Social Work Education: The Case of Street Children

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As social work is a practice-oriented academic discipline therefore there is a continuous need to integrate theoretical knowledge with experiential knowledge in different areas of social work practice. This paper attempts to capture the reflections of practitioners working with street children on the connections, perceived gaps and desired changes in social work education and training. The paper is based on the data collected by the author through in-depth interviews with practitioners working with street children in the metropolitan cities of Bangalore, Chennai, Delhi, Kolkata and Mumbai. Firstly, it draws aetiology of the problems and issues of street children followed by implications that social work education and training has for working with street children. Finally, it captures the reflections of both trained practitioners and paraprofessionals working with street children in the five metropolitan cities mentioned above.

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Introduction

Social work both as an academic discipline and as a profession is primarily practice-oriented. This is the reason why many social work educators consider 'fieldwork training' as the hallmark of social work education. It is argued that knowledge component of classroom teaching is complemented by development of values and skills through supervised fieldwork training in social work education. As early as 1957, Prof. M.S. Gore, one of pioneers of social work education in India, highlighted the importance of practice as well as fieldwork training in social work:

> Essentially social work skills are concerned with problem solving and as such they rest upon knowledge contained in the social and biological sciences pertaining to man and society. This knowledge is gained partly in the didactic sessions of the curriculum but it becomes meaningful only when the student has to test it in

> situation after situation in the field. Thus it can be seen that the practical experience must be closely integrated at every step of the way with what the student learns in the classroom (Gore, 1957, p. 3).

Having highlighted the importance of practice in social work, let us now turn our attention towards nature of social work practice. Social work practice is plural in nature with regard to intervention levels as well as areas of practice. Different methods of social work warrant interventions at individual, group, community and policy levels in diverse areas of social work practice. As social work is essentially underpinned by altruistic spirit, social work practice involves working with marginalized sections of population in different settings, areas and issues. These include hospital settings, social work practice in community settings, social work practice with the disabled, women-centric social work, social work practice with notified and de-notified tribes, social work practice with families and children, etc. One such area of social work intervention chosen for analysis in this paper is street children.

It hardly needs elaboration that the people living on the streets exemplify the extreme manifestation of socio-economic inequality and poverty. Every aspect of their life is exposed to the public gaze; they epitomize social degradation, and this is further emphasised when they are unaccompanied children and adolescents (de Moura, 2002). Street children are, thus, a marginalised and vulnerable section of the population that calls for the attention of social workers.

As social work education and training is wide in its scope and captures different areas of social work practice, there is no specific focus on street children in its curriculum and pedagogy. However, different fields of specialisation in social work, such as 'criminology and justice' and 'family and child welfare', do capture certain aspects of the problem of street children and recognise the importance of intervening with them. The methods of social work practice such as casework and group work are recognised as important in guiding interventions with street children. Also, the fieldwork component in the social work curriculum recognises street children as an area of intervention and places students in organisations that work with street children for their on-field training process. Before we highlight the reflections of practitioners working with street children on social work education, it is necessary to develop an understanding on the issues and problems of street children.

Street Children: Who are they?

Street children are largely an urban phenomenon. In the wake of rapid industrialisation, there has been large-scale migration of people from rural to urban areas all over the world. The underdeveloped as well as the developing countries have been unable to deal with such a huge influx of people into towns and cities, especially with regard to housing them. A major consequence of this has been the proliferation of slums and shanty towns in the cities. According to Pandey (1991), urban poverty has become a common characteristic of the new

human habitat. Trapped in poverty, children and youth have become one of the most vulnerable groups to face the risks of rapid and unregulated urbanisation. Children in cities are encountering a variety of problems such as child labour, sexual harassment, physical abuse, neglect and abandonment. Moreover, many international organisations, such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), as well as Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) have expressed that the most marginalised population in the cities is that of street children whose numbers are growing rapidly.

Street children are variously termed in different countries. In the developed countries, they are referred to as '*homeless youth*', '*runaways*' or '*throwaways*'. In the developing countries, they are known as '*parking boys*' (in Kenya), '*pogey boys*' (in Philippines), '*pivetes*' (in Brazil), '*ragpickers*' or '*sadak chaap bachche*' (in India), '*gamines*' (in Bogota), '*scugnizzo*' (in Naples), '*pajaro frutero*' (in Peru), etc. (ibid.). Interestingly, the popular names with which they are called in different countries invariably carry a negative connotation indicating the society's attitude towards them.

Although there have been many attempts to define street children, the first globally accepted definition was framed by UNICEF, and it runs as follows: "Those for whom the street (in the widest sense of the word, that is, unoccupied dwellings, wasteland, etc.) more than their family has become their real home, a situation in which there is no protection, supervision, or direction from responsible adults" (as cited in Dabir 2005, p. 9). UNICEF has further divided street children into three operational categories:

1. *Children on the Street*: Forming the largest category, these are largely working children who have homes; most return to their families at the end of the day.
2. *Children of the Street*: These children are a group who has chosen the street as their home and it is there that they seek shelter, livelihood, and companionship. They have occasional or rare contacts with their families.
3. *Abandoned Children*: These children have no contact with their families. They are entirely on their own, not only for material survival but also for emotional and psychological support. They include orphans, runaways and lost or destitute children. Often these children are also referred to as "nowhere" children because they may not be traceable.

UNICEF's definition and categorisation are based on the relationship of these children with their families. Others have critiqued and expanded this definition on the basis of factors such as socio-cultural conditions in different countries and gender of street children. Aptekar (2004) has proposed to take into account a number of factors to provide a modern definition of 'children in particularly difficult circumstances':

> The term describes children whose suffering indicates the highest risk to mental health, and includes children traumatized by war, natural and technological disasters, and street children [as per the UNICEF definition]. While the modern

> definition will take these facts into account, the stress will be on how they are coping with whatever brought them to the street in the first place, as well as the variety of problems they encounter once they are on the street (p. 19).

In India, many interventions with regard to the problems of street children are made by voluntary organisations/NGOs. Due to the ambiguity in defining street children each organisation has adapted its own definition based on its area of work. Thus, there are many definitions of street children in India depending upon the specific problems that the organisations are working on.

Street Culture and the Problems faced by Street Children

Street children, unlike other children, experience a very different childhood on the streets. Early on in their life they are exposed to an unprotected environment on the streets. They are individuals who are a significant part of the political economy of the streets. Not much has been documented or discussed in the 'mainstream' media about this. This perhaps signifies the stigma that is attached to 'street life' and consequently to street children. The life on the streets highlights certain aspects about its political economy. From their experience the practitioners have observed that there is a nexus between street goons, police, and municipal authorities for forcing street children into illegal activities such as begging. Begging on the streets generates a lot of money for the local goons. Since it is considered illegal, the police and the municipal authorities get an informal license to engage in corrupt practices vis-à-vis these activities on the streets. The money that a street child makes through begging at the end of the day includes shares of all these stakeholders. But, irrespective of the amount of money that the child makes, s/he is given only a fixed sum by the goon. The rest of the money is divided between the goons, the police, and the municipal authorities. If a child, who makes a good amount of money through begging refuses to do the job, s/he by use of brutal physical force is dragged into it. John, a practitioner from Bangalore, observed this with regard to street children being forced into pick-pocketing by the street goons. Altaf Shaikh (1995), from his observations with respect to the working life of street children at Chowpatty Beach in Mumbai, has hinted on the political economy of the streets and how in a hidden form it utilizes the labour of street children for meagre returns:

> Earning commissions as high as 50 per cent each day from pony rides, *baba gadis* and game stalls, they are probably best off among Bombay's street children – making as much as Rs. 300 on a good Saturday [. . . .] I could not fathom why the stall and pony owners of Chowpatty paid such large commissions . . . It was not long before I learnt the chilling answer [. . . .] the trap that opened for them every morning on the beach – the gambling den . . . Run by the brother of a game-stall owner . . . on Chowpatty. The plan was deadly – pay the children handsome commission at night, and get it all back from them in the morning at the gambling den (np).

Then there are other 'legal' businesses as well where street children serve as

cheap labour. For example, in the area around Jama Masjid in Delhi, there is a wholesale market of different commodities such as electronic items, medicine, and clothes. Employing street children for such work at cheap wages is a regular practice there. Street children serve as low-wage labourers to perform temporary and menial jobs, subsidising many activities for the affluent and non-poor. Thus, street children are quite useful to many individuals and groups, who take advantage of and greatly benefit from their services (Desrochers, 1999).

Moreover, these children are large consumers of other illegal commodities such as drugs. For these children, drugs might be a coping mechanism to deal with the harsh realities of street life, but it is a vicious circle in which they are trapped by drug peddlers making the street culture even more complex. Practitioners from Bangalore, Chennai, Delhi, Kolkata, and Mumbai expressed that more than 90 per cent of the street children are addicted to one or more forms of *nasha* (drugs, alcohol, and inhalants).The most popular form of *nasha* among street children is inhalants such as shoe-glue and whiteners, as they are easily and cheaply available. Barnabe D'Souza (2004) has observed,

> The street has its own security, unwritten norms, and survival modes. The constellation of a street child's relationships juxtaposes a sub-culture that is very unique to the streets. A street child having to fend for himself on the streets, is vulnerable to a complex array of influences: physical, social, relational, and environmental. [. . . .] Drug consumption is not a physiological necessity, but a survival strategy, "to conform to" and "to belong to the clique" who (sic). in essence becomes his [street child] nucleus. A street child's drug consumption . . . is one that brings him acceptance and initiates him into the mainstream of street culture (p. 44).

The examples cited above point to the fact that street children get dependent on street life once they are trapped in drug addiction and other survival needs such as employment (whether legal or illegal). But, more importantly, the streets and the stakeholders there are equally in need of their services, whether for legal or illegal activities. Once on the streets, children are part of a different social realm and display personal characteristics which defy the norms and values of the 'mainstream' society. Children away from mainstream society are said to be completely regimented by the lifestyle, values and norms of a subculture of their own – the 'street society' (Lusk, 1992). The power structures on the street are clearly defined, wherein street children are stuck at the bottom end of the pyramid. Activities such as gambling, sexual abuse, drug abuse are a common part of the street culture (D'Souza 2004). Such a culture gives rise to many economic, social, psychological, and health problems that street children encounter in their everyday life.

Why are Children on the Streets?

Street migration is a complex process in which a variety of factors – such as

poverty, abuse, abandonments, violence, natural calamities, and freedom – that either push or pull the children from their families (some do not even have that) and communities into the harsh life on the streets (Connolly 1990). Thus, every street child has a reason to be on the streets of metropolitan cities. Pallipuram (1999) has highlighted the following micro-factors that are responsible for children to leave their homes and come on the streets: (a) harassment from alcoholic parents, (b) ill-treatment from step parents, (c) broken families, (d) influence of peer group (often two three children from the same native place run together to explore glamorous life in the cities), and (e) disinterest in education.

Desai (2009), on the other hand, has pointed out macro reasons responsible for the street children phenomenon. According to him, the phenomenon of street children has emerged as a concomitant to industrialisation across the world. Industrial growth and economic development have not been uniform throughout a country and this has often resulted in imbalances between the rural and urban areas. This has caused the migration of people from the rural to the urban areas in search of employment. The worst to be hit by this process are women and children. Also, due to extremely poor familial conditions, for many children, it is an economic compulsion to be on the streets. Often, parent's earnings are insufficient to provide for the family's minimum needs. Children have to be sent to work, mostly in the unorganised sector to supplement the family's income.

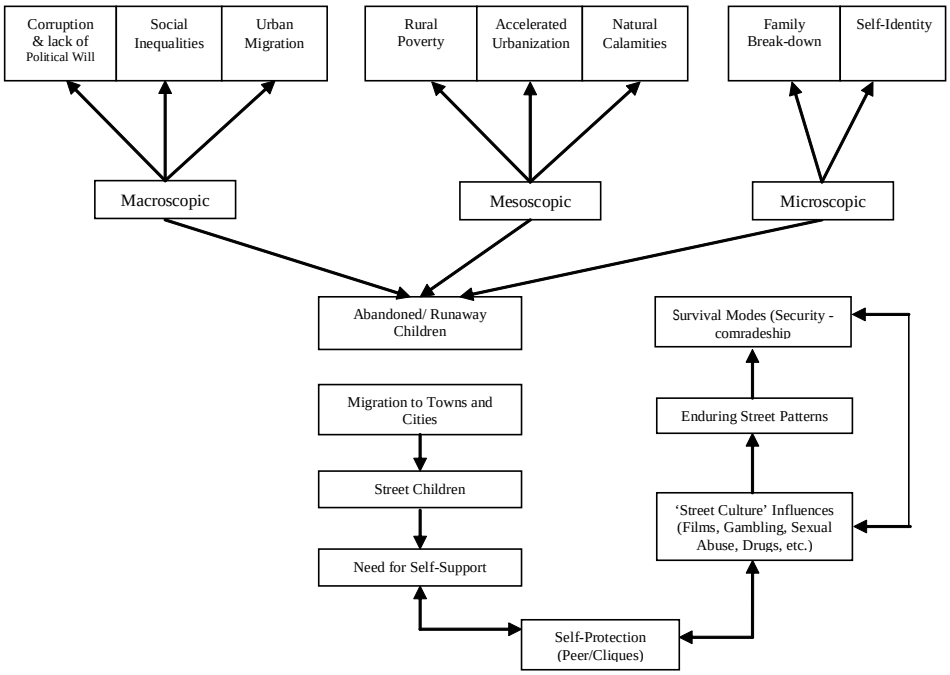
Lakshapati and Urs (1999) have taken an even more radical stand in describing the phenomenon of street children. According to them,

> In spite of the increasing visibility of India's 'overall' development on the international scene, the 'inner contradiction' has been that the enrichment of a few is accompanied by the marginalisation or exclusion of millions of others. The real issue is that development continues to benefit some people, while many others are left out and pushed out. The phenomenon of street children has its roots not just in what meets the eye (poverty, family problems, etc.), but in the whole gamut of development itself (p. 86).

D'Souza (2004) has given a more comprehensive picture of the entire issue by illustrating the forces (macroscopic, mesoscopic, and microscopic) that seem uncontrollable and which perpetuate and consequently produce street living patterns that are enduring, and invert reality (see Figure 1). Thus, we may conclude this section with the following observation: micro-reasons such as broken families and abusive parents reflect upon causative factors that explain the macro-reality, responsible for the street children phenomenon in urban cities and towns.

Having drawn out the aetiology of the problem, let us now shift our attention to the implications that social work education and training has for practice with street children.

Figure 1
The Street Child Phenomenon – An Inverted Reality



Source: D'Souza (2005, p. 43)

Social Work Education and Training: Implications for Practice with Street Children

Let us now analyse the implications that social work education and training might have for practice in this area. The methods of social work practice taught in institutions of social work entail organised practice at individual, group, community, and policy levels. For example, social casework presents a structured process of dealing with individuals and their immediate social environment, drawing on theories and concepts from the social sciences, especially psychology. Many NGOs make individualistic interventions with street children. Thus, knowledge of this method might help them function in a more organised and structured manner. Lately, the work with street children involves advocacy for their rights, involving negotiations with state and central governments. Knowledge of social action and social work research methods might be helpful in this process.

Social work education involves, in its supportive domain, developing understanding about the theories and concepts (borrowed from the social sciences) to help students in comprehending the larger social phenomenon and functioning of different social, economic, political, and cultural systems and sub-systems. Most practitioners and activists have identified poverty, social exclusion,

and subsequent family disintegration as causative factors for street children phenomenon. This highlights the importance of the knowledge that Social Work students develop through theories and concepts for making interventions in this area.

Another important area that is emphasised in social work education is the fieldwork training of students. The idea is to facilitate learning from practical situations through direct on-field experiences. This is also emphasised in the pedagogy as educators draw from both their field experiences and that of students in the classroom. The interventions in the area of street children involve work with different stakeholders such as employers of children, street goons, police, and politicians, besides the children themselves. This approach of direct engagement with children and other stakeholders has been developed through the practical experience of the practitioners. Thus, the intervention strategies are developed on the basis of both theoretical knowledge and practical experience. The same is emphasised in social work education and training highlighting its inherent connection with practice in the area of street children.

Thus, with regard to this area, social work education and training has an important role to play. It has to address itself to the social reality of street children. The profession of social work needs to build up a knowledge base for understanding the dynamics of the problem of street children and for the development of appropriate policy and programmes to deal with the issues related to street children (Rane & Shroff, 1994). Also, the institutions of social work education can play an important role in conducting policy-based research studies on the street children phenomenon (ibid.). Having highlighted the implications that social work education and training has for practice with street children, finally let us discuss the reflections of practitioners on social work education and training.

Reflections of Practitioners on Connections, Gaps and Desired Changes in Social Work Education and Training

Practitioners had different views on social work education and training. Some were supportive and praised it, while others were extremely critical. In this final section of the paper, we shall highlight the practitioners' views. We will discuss learning that trained social workers have drawn from social work education and training, connections that they draw between their education and practice, and the gaps that they find between the two. The reflections of practitioners who have not received any education or training in social work would be further insightful in identifying the gaps. Moreover, we will discuss the reflections of practitioners on how the gaps can be filled.

Mr Junaid from Delhi said,

> *By undergoing education and training in social work a lot of learning and unlearning took place. Through the fieldwork component I got exposed to social realities for the first time. In addition to that I learnt how to do things professionally, be objective in my approach, and understand a problem from different perspectives. The learning took place both in the classroom, and in the*

> *field. In the classroom I gained theoretical knowledge through different disciplines such psychology and sociology. In the field I learnt through the observations that I made and the experiments that I conducted in the application of different methods of social work practice in the field settings in which I was placed. Principles of social work such as non-judgemental attitude and objectivity still guide my practice with street children. Even the writing skills that I developed through fieldwork reports are helpful in my current work as a programme coordinator in the organisation in which I work. Overall, two years of education and training in the master's programme was helpful in taking out bias from my work as well as in developing a commitment to work for the betterment of the society.*

Ms. Shivani from Bangalore observed that for her theory and practice went hand in hand. For example, in her fieldwork placement with Child Welfare Committee, she was able to apply the knowledge gained through casework and group work in practice. The importance of social action as a method of social work practice was realised when she started to work with a child rights organisation after her master's programme. She said,

> *In my work with the child rights organisation, I was involved in protests and lobbying with government to raise awareness on issues of child rights with special focus on street children. That is where the knowledge of social action really helped me. Moreover, when I reflect back on two years of training in social work, I feel that principles of social work such as confidentiality and acceptance made me more accurate and effective in my work. They also helped me in internalising the importance of working with people and not for them. On the other hand my practice in the area of child rights helped me to understand the problems of children at grass-roots level. It was then that I was able to relate to the theories that were taught to me in MSW.*

Similarly, Ms. Priesha from Kolkata observed that while pursuing social work education she learnt theories by concurrently relating with them in her fieldwork placements during her master's programme. In addition, she said that she learnt how to work with people without discriminating between them.

Ms. Shilpa from Mumbai said that as she specialised in Criminology and Justice in her MA in social work, it helped her in developing deeper understanding of the Juvenile Justice System and other legislations related to children as a practitioner. Social work education also made her realise the importance of both theory and practice and how they should go together in working with street children. Therefore, in her work, she has tried to generate study circles between practitioners so that they can develop a theoretical understanding on the issue as well. Through practice, she said, she was able to understand the different roles that a social worker needs to play while making interventions with street children. In practice, she was also able to challenge the principles of social work profession and develop a better understanding on the same.

Analysis of these reflections by practitioners trained in social work highlights a few important points. Learning by doing is as important as learning developed through theories. Probably, for this reason, all the practitioners above highlighted

the importance of fieldwork training in social work education and the exposure it gives on different issues. A few practitioners also reflected on the methods of social work practice that they were taught and how it helped them in structuring their work. However, Mr Junaid's reflection also highlights that the methods need to be experimented with and the definiteness in practising them cannot be achieved. Most of the trained social work practitioners also highlighted the importance of principles of social work profession and how they develop a non-discriminatory perspective towards people. Lastly, the importance of knowledge of different disciplines such as law, psychology, and sociology has been highlighted.

Practitioners who have not undergone social work education and training are often critical about it. Mr John from Bangalore said,

> *I have met many trained social workers and they often refer to social work practice as a professional activity. This they say has been taught to them in their respective institutions of social work education. The injustice and oppression in the society is a political process and one can only deal with it through political means and language whether Gandhian, Marxist or Maoist. The categorisation of social work as a professional activity takes away this political element. This does not fit in my imagination of how change has to take place. I believe that there is a revolutionary potential in people at any given point of time which in the current system under neo-liberalism is being curbed. Moreover, in the Indian society, systems such as caste and patriarchy are used to maintain hierarchy. The only way to dismantle these systems is by helping each individual realise her/his revolutionary potential. Does social work education and training do that? I have my doubts about it.*

Mr Kunal from Bangalore has undertaken guest lectures in many institutions of social work education. This has given him the opportunity to interact with social work educators and students. In addition, he has studied the curriculum of many institutions of social work education. On the basis of his experience, he said,

> *I believe social work is a methodology to instrument social change. It is a process in which the social worker derives a way to contextualise issues in a society and work for the betterment of the society. However, in social work education and training, the understanding of the subaltern and the various ways in which it has been created all through history is grossly missing. Also, the work of para-professionals has been equally important when it comes to the area of street children. Para-professionals understand the power dynamics on the streets and are also able to relate it to the power dynamics that operate in the communities from where street children come. Their understanding of the issue at a macro-level is far superior to that of trained social workers. But institutions of Social Work do not seem to acknowledge the work of para-professionals.*

Mr Inder from Delhi, who has also been a guest lecturer at an institution of social work education, said that the work of activists and para-professionals is totally missing in social work curriculum. He opined that they need to acknowledge the action-oriented writings of practitioners and need to include them in the

curriculum. As this is not happening, the students miss out on practical knowledge. It is for this reason, he observed, social work students are not able to convert their theoretical knowledge into a perspective which is important for practice.

The reflections of these practitioners highlight the radical perspective that is built in their practice. Moreover, their reflections are in consonance with those social work educators who challenge a professional status for social work in India.

Ms. Shilpa tried to highlight a few reasons behind such polarised views. She said that, during the 1990s, the contribution of field knowledge to social work education was immense. But, over the years, she has seen that diminishing. On the one hand, the educators now are dealing with multiple issues simultaneously and the education system has different components such as theoretical knowledge, skill building, etc. She said that students are now being trained in a generic mode. On the other hand, the practitioners are working on specific issues. The gap between the two also arises because of this. However, she said, it has been an on-going debate between the academicians and practitioners and the critique that they give to each other is healthy as it helps both in realising their shortcomings, so that they can work on them.

Ms. Vaijyanti, a trained social worker from Bangalore identified the dynamism of field reality as a possible reason for the gap between social work education and social work practice. She said,

> *The issue of street children is continuously changing and evolving. The analysis of these changes is not happening in the institutions of social work education. As a result of this, knowledge does not get upgraded; even the definition of social work has not changed for last ten years. Even the books that are being referred to are outdated and do not match with the contemporary context, this also gets reflected in the pedagogy. For example, the word delinquent is still being used for street children in institutions of social work education whereas practitioners have stopped using this word on the field.*

Having analysed the gaps and the critiques that practitioners reflected upon vis-à-vis social work education and training, let us discuss their views on how these gaps can be filled and a healthy relation fostered between Social education and training, and social work practice.

Mr Junaid from Delhi said that more communication should be facilitated between academicians and practitioners. Practitioners should be given the opportunity to provide feedback into the knowledge base of social work education. Academicians should then reflect on the field-based knowledge of practitioners and take it to the classroom, for sharing with the students. Also, fieldwork supervisors in the institutions of social work education should play a proactive role in collaborating with the agencies where the students are placed for fieldwork. They should provide theoretical inputs in the agencies' projects so that practitioners can learn from it.

Mr Joy from Kolkata said that deeper communication will help the academicians to understand the task-orientation in the field. The importance of situation-specific knowledge can only be understood if academicians are more

connected to the field. It is important for academicians to understand this and discuss situation-specific examples in the classroom. He added, "*Theories are always at the back of the minds of practitioners and the abstraction of theories can only be taken away through field knowledge*".

Mr Kunal from Bangalore was of the opinion that better connect can be established between social work education/training and practice if students are groomed to build a non-governmental, non-corporate perspective into any social change initiative, which is critical of the current power structures in the society. Mr Swamy from Chennai was of the opinion that social work education and training should build into the students microscopic skills of working at the grass-roots along with developing an understanding of the macro-reality.

Ms. Shilpa suggested that the field action projects that have been initiated by many institutions of Social Work need to network with other NGOs and together they can undertake action researches on different social issues so that practitioners, academicians and students can benefit from each other's perspectives and knowledge.

Thus, we can see that, although social work education/training and social work practice appear disconnected, practitioners do not discount the importance of theory for practice. Also, they have reflected that task-orientation might relegate theory to the background on the field; they nevertheless operate with certain theoretical assumptions in the field. Also, their reflections highlight the continuous change that takes place in the field and the importance of building the changes into existing theories.

Conclusion

The practice-orientation and commitment to work with marginalised and vulnerable sections of population, recognises work with street children as an important area of social work practice. It is well known that 'street children' is largely an urban phenomenon, triggered by the migration of people from rural to urban areas in the wake of rapid industrialisation.

The 'street life' has a unique sub-culture and political economy, wherein children are trapped in the vicious cycle of drug abuse and illegal activities, as a result of which, street children face multiple problems. In addition to the problems of meeting basic survival needs of food, clothing, shelter, and sound physical and mental health, street children undergo physical and sexual harassment from goons, police, municipal authorities, and even their peers. Another major challenge faced by street children is the stigma attached to street life that adversely impacts their self-esteem.

People who have been working with street children observe that there are both micro-factors and macro-factors either pushing or pulling children on to the streets. Micro-factors such as broken families, abuse by alcoholic or step parents, and peer group influence arise because of macro-factors such as poverty, unemployment, and migration leading to the existence of street children phenomenon.

Practitioners working with street children come from different academic

backgrounds. Rather, majority of the organisations that I visited in the metropolitan cities of Bangalore, Chennai, Delhi, Kolkata, and Mumbai had few trained social work practitioners. This highlights that education and training in social work is not a necessary requirement for working with street children. Thus, although street children is recognised by institutions of social work education as an area for professional social work practice, it is not limited to only trained social workers.

As far as social work education and training is concerned, practitioners expressed both supportive and critical views. They emphasised the need to develop deeper communication between the educators and practitioners. Moreover, they were of the view that knowledge developed from on-field experiments needs to be built into the curriculum and pedagogy of institutions of Social Work. They also expressed the need for learning through the theoretical knowledge of the educators if they can engage proactively with the agencies as fieldwork supervisors of their students. Lastly, they opined that more action-oriented research needs to be undertaken on the issue of street children. This can also be visualised as one platform where practitioners and academicians can come together and learn from each other's experiences.

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SOCIAL WORK JOURNAL
(BI-ANNUAL)
ISSN 0976-5484
6 (1) January–June 2015, pp. 75–89

Women in Displacement Camps: Towards a Comprehensive Framework for Social Work Education

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Within past several decades conflict induced internal displacement have become a major social and political concern around the globe along with growing IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons). Enforced displacement to an unfamiliar place with often limited resources and choices, often leads to a situation where people struggle to survive as a result of material deprivation and impoverishment. More so, displacement resulting from violence of varied consequence often creates a sense of insecurity which inevitably erodes the mental health and well-being of this vulnerable population with lasting impact. The paper is an attempt to document the lived experiences of Muslim women IDPs of Hapachara camp, Assam in the event of protracted displacement and their struggle to survive on a daily basis as a displaced. The study attempts to develop a comprehensive framework which could provide base for the social work practitioners to assess the situations in displacement camps and critically understand the structural factors that underlie so as to make an informed comprehensive intervention and to link social work values with practice.

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Introduction

Internal displacement has become a major social and political concern in the recent years. With the presence of conflict and violence around the globe, there has been an exponential growth of IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons) facing protracted displacement. There is an estimate of 40.8 million people displaced as result of conflict and violence, which is twice the number of refugees (IDMC, 2016). Considering the nature of their displacement[1], many of them are unseen, undocumented, and some to the extent of denied existence by some governments.

Post-colonial Assam has witnessed several conflict induced internal displacement[2] of Muslims which have led to the social exclusion of this religious group who are already marginalized in the society. Muslim IDPs of Hapachara camp is one among such groupexperiencing protracted displacement in the past

several decades. They were the victims of 1993 violence spearheaded by armed Bodo militia which took place in the parts of Kokrajhar district of present day BTC (Bodo Territorial Council). To further entrench their anguish, they were followed by another displacement in the year 2000 from the government sponsored relief camp (Goswami, 2008) experiencing double displacement in the past two decades.

Although, the history of conflicts tell us that bullets and bombs might have killed men and women indiscriminately without invoking gender discrimination, however, most of these histories remain silent about the gender discrimination and how disproportionately conflict affects women and girls (Ashford & Huet-Vaughn, 2000; Kaldor, 2006).

The consequences of any armed conflict are usually understood in relation to deaths, injuries and atrocities in the form of rapes, enforced disappearances; however, the indirect and long-term impact of violence is often overlooked. The conflict with its long-term effects often perpetuates the existing inequalities and discrimination which are gendered in nature and which disproportionately affects women and girls (Ashford & Huet-Vaughn, 2000; Kaldor, 2006).

It is a known fact that the majority of women across the world, especially those living in poor and developing countries, share a common burden of inequality, discrimination and are surviving myriad forms of gender-based violence which has its roots deeply entrenched in the structures of society. Therefore, it requires a distinct analysis considering their vulnerability, especially in the context of violence. This has been elucidated by the UN Platform for Action (1995) that the unequal status of women in the society has made them more vulnerable and affected during armed conflicts. The vulnerability and victimization does not conclude with conflict but continues even in displacement camps where the unequal status leads to differential suffering. Gardam (1997) argues women in armed conflict face "double disability" due to their inferior status as women. Taking cue from Gardam, it is significant to understand this factor especially in countries like India where patriarchal values and norms are deep rooted in the society's thoughts and actions. Given the vulnerability and unequal status, displacement can have adverse impacts on women which can further exclude them from the society.

This has challenged the social work intervention and discipline, stipulating a focussed and specific approach in the context of enforced displacement. As Howe (2009, p.2) expounds, "If the world in which work happens to be complicated and turbulent, the need to make sense and know our way around it is even more urgent." As displacement being a multi-faceted phenomenon, social workers need to examine their practice and assumptions and develop new perspectives as agents of social change. The present paper attempts to bring new insights for the practitioners to make effective interventions based on empirical evidence. The study provides a base for the social work practitioners to assess the situations in displacement camps and critically understand the structural factors that underlie so as to make an informed comprehensive intervention and to link social work values with practice. Though social work theories and knowledge are generic (Payne, Adams, & Dominelli, 2002), displacement requires a specialized intervention which considers the different facets of displacement and its long term

effects on individuals. This is an endeavour to bring new insights about displacement by critically engaging and addressing the gender dimensions of displacement and how does it percolates in to the daily lives of the women in Hapachara camp. In order to contextualize the hard realities of enforced displacement and its effects on mental health, a border conceptual framework is needed to develop which could not only inform the social work practitioners but also help to develop a critical social work paradigm about displacement and violence.

To develop new insights about the dynamics of displacement and its effects on women living in camps, the study incorporated mental health and well-being, into the larger framework of social determinants of health. Both have the potential of being extended beyond the contents of conflict induced displacement which can identify additional areas of socially patterned stressful experience in life, albeit, using them in present context will assist us to understand the realities in which women experience the conflict and its long term effects on their lives.

Character of Displacement

Displacement is an imposed movement from a usual place of habitat to a space which is devoid of resources and means for survival, a complete "transformation of life" (Oslender, 2007). It is a disruption in the whole functioning of various systems interrelated to land, particularly communities whose livelihood depends on land which can shape their socio-economic status (Kondylis, 2010). In fact, Tizon (cited in Global commission on International Migration, 2005) describes displacement as a form of 'cultural death', where the displaced are forced to take up new practices and routines. Displacement further excludes the IDPs as their accessibility to employment in the new location is often limited (Kondylis, 2010), which reduce the consumption of displaced population (O' Reilly, 2015). It cuts down the "capital stock" (O' Reilly, 2015) and the possibility to compete in the labour market resulting in less productivity and restricted choices (Roberts, n.d.). Consequently the economic vulnerability of the displaced population results in taking up new social 'roles' and 'routines' which affect their well-being (Flor Edilma, 2008; O' Reilly, 2015).

Displacement is followed by adverse living condition due to limited and restricted resources, often confined to the space of camps and temporary shelters. Such spaces have further marginalized and excluded the IDPs due its dehumanizing conditions (Oslender, 2007). These spaces are characterised by high density population, lack of toilets and sanitation, inaccessibility of food and resources. This population subsequently becomes a new category as 'internally displaced person' leaving behind all their previous identities (Oslender, 2007). It is a situation which gives an individual the right to demand for "restitution" along with being 'stigmatized" (Flor Edilma, 2008). These are the characters of displacement taken into consideration while conceptualizing displacement. The present study attempts understand the mental health of women within the framework of displacement which is a process of disruption in 'daily social life' and 'infrastructure' (WHO, 2008). We conceptualize women IDPs as periphery

within the larger periphery of the society.

Conceptualizing Mental Health

Understanding mental health as just absence of disorder limits the scope of a broader conceptualization of mental health. It is not surprising that much of the suffering people faces are caused by different exploitative structures. Thus overlooking factors like caste, class, religion, gender and other socio-economic conditions leads to a very myopic understanding of mental health. In the process of conceptualizing mental health Jahoda explains it as (1958, cited in Macklin, 1972, p. 347) "…the absence of disease may constitute a necessary, but not a sufficient criterion for mental health." She is drifting from the conventional understanding of mental health as disorder to understand in terms of well-being. Mental health is distinctive from the term mental illness which is a broad term for all the mental disorders. World Health Organizations has defined mental health as "a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community" (WHO, 2009, para. 1).

Mental health 'problems' or 'difficulties' are triggered by 'daily stressors', external pressure or other painful events, not necessarily 'traumatic'. It is widely understood that positive mental health will help a person to reach his/her full emotional and intellectual potential subsequently leading to achieve their social and working life which makes him/her an asset in social cohesion and for the larger social and economic welfare (Creek & Lougher, 2008). Thus s/he cannot be considered mentally healthy even in the nonexistence of any specific diagnosable mental disorder. Mental health is a result of the larger social, economic and political system in which an individual belongs. An individual achieves positive mental health only when s/he attains a state of overall well-being, especially their psychological and emotional well-being. Mental health and well-being of low and middle-income countries are prominently directed by these macro-social factors (Das *et al.,* 2007). The health of the marginalized and underprivileged which is often the result of structural injustice which ought to be understood in this regard rather a bio-medical paradigm (Chavez *et al.,* 2005).

Displacement: A Social Determinant of Mental Health

Displacement is a reflection of "loss of human rights" (WHO, 2008) which shapes the quality of material conditions of IDPs. In relation to social determinants approach, displacement can be understood as a social factor which determines the health of the population. This approach views health in the terms of the social, cultural and power dimensions of the society. WHO defines "social determinants of health as the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age – conditions that together provide the freedom people need to live lives they value" (Sen, 1999, cited in WHO, 2008, p. 26). Evidences substantiate the direct connection between social determinants and population health (Marmot & Wilkinson, 2000). In contrast to psychiatric understanding of mental illness where

the causes are limited to life events as triggering factor (Sadock & Sadock, 2005), this framework looks at mental health and well-being through deprivation of materials and impoverishment which have direct and indirect effects. As Keating & Hertzman (1999) mention, it is inevitable to affect the well-being of an individual by means of material deprivation. Thus material conditions play a role in creating disparities in psychosocial stresses (Stansfeld & Marmot, 2002).

However, much of the literatures define social determinants of health through material deprivations (Lynch *et al.*, 2004; Leon & Walt, 2001). This approach can overlook certain structural factors like gender, especially in the case of women IDPs, which shapes their health in the comparison to men in general and also create disparities within the displaced population. It is significant to mention Raphael (2006) at this juncture who states the influence of structural factors in shaping the material conditions of an individual which determine the quality of social determinants of health. In India exploitative structures like caste, religion, gender, etc., influence the availability and accessibility of resources. This approach looks at displacement as a factor which shapes the health of the IDPs in general and also the structural factors like gender in particular to understand the mental health of women IDPs.

Methodology

The present study is a qualitative inquiry into the conflict induced internal displacement and its long term effects on the mental health of women IDPs living in Hapachara camp, Assam. It is an attempt to understand mental health through its social determinants and the different processes which create disparities in the quality of social determinants of health. The research paradigm requires for a *social constructivist world view*[3]so as to document the subjective meaning the participants hold in the context of displacement. Thus an *exploratory research design*[4]is opted to get an in-depth understanding of the effects of displacement on the mental health, which demands for a *qualitative* method to obtain the primary data from the participants.

Considering the reluctance of the population in participating[5] in the present study as well as their perceived insecurities[6], only nine respondents could be interviewed. A*non-proportional quota sampling* method of *purposive sampling* was utilized for the selection of respondents. As mentioned by Leary (2001) this sampling method is less restrictive in nature and does not require in matching the proportion of the population making it compatible in the given context. The sample for the study was identified through a two stage sample procedure. Stage one was selection of the area which was restricted to the women IDPs of Hapachara Camp, Assam. This community is one of the oldest displaced people who are facing protracted displacement and waiting for a durable solution. The geographical proximity as well as the perceived acceptance[7] from the community directed the selection process. The stage two was to select sample with conflict as a reference point. This was done to differentiate IDPs who are born displaced from IDPs who experienced direct violence and displacement whose mental health and well-being can be different.

Interview technique was adopted to get an in-depth understanding from the respondents by employing a semi-structured interview guide. Although, the interview guide was written in English language, it was translated to Hindi by the researchers since the medium of interaction between the researchers and respondents was Hindi. The interviews were conducted between the months of December 2015 to February 2016. The data collected was transcribed to English and then analysed manually. A thematic analysis was carried out based on the recurring themes. The Ethical clearance for the study was given by the Ethical Committee of Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Guwahati, Assam. Informed consent was obtained before the administration of the interview guide.

Data Analysis

After thoroughly analysing the data, a thematic analysis was carried out based on the following recurring themes:

Camp Life: A Struggle to Survive

Life with in a confined space of a camp with limited resources and choices makes survival difficult and often a distressing phenomenon. All the respondents noted the absence of various indispensable needs for their very existence which entrench their distress. One such is the food insecurity and inaccessibility of sufficient food leading to hunger and malnutrition. However what makes the feelings and experiences of IDPs distinct from rest of the deprived population is their easy accessibility of sufficient food and self-sufficiency before displacement. All the respondents noted their well-being in the pre-displacement period making their present situation hard to adjust.

> *There were days when we used to have 4 meals a day. But today hardly two meals is difficult to get. It reminds of my past days when I never had to stay hungry*. (Woman, 48, daily wage labourer)

As the women were mostly dependent on the men for livelihood, displacement took away their means of procuring food and their ability to survive. All the respondents mentioned that today much of their effort and hard work goes to mere subsistence and the thoughts about survival on a daily basis. One woman 44 years old mentions:

> *I start my day thinking about how to make today's meal. If either of us (husband) does not get any work, we are going to starve. There are nights when I only think about tomorrow's meal. It gives me sleepless nights.* (Woman, 44, daily wage labourer)

Subsequently this has set about change in gender roles where woman felt obliged to contribute economically to the family which was not presumed to be their role. The unpreparedness to take such a responsibility along with their perceived

meaning of the role makes it more troublesome in the context of displacement. All the respondents mentioned about the disappointment in the kind of work they indulge to procure food, which they do not find pride in. In the process of surviving they are forced to give up their dignity and self-esteem. A woman 52 years old noted:

> *My husband cannot work anymore... he is gone weak. At this age I have to wash others clothes so that we can buy rice for dinner.* (Woman, 52, daily wage labourer)

Further their insecurity is augmented by the perceived fear of being harmed and their vulnerability towards violence. The respondents noted about the fear embedded in them and the life confined to the camp space which is an epitome of otherness and persisting tension exacerbates this fear. A woman 49 years old noted:

> *I go out with fear. Many of us got killed and never returned (after work). It is very threatening to go out even for work...* (Woman, 49, daily wage labourer)

The respondents also noted about the insecurity and their compulsion to put up beside a river which is dangerous and guarantees minimal security. The vulnerability and helplessness to determine their environment intensifies their distress. They noted their limited choices in regard to their life and place of living. A woman 44 years old says:

> *Monsoon is very difficult, there will be water everywhere. It is like we are living under water... last monsoon one kid died in the river behind. This is not a safe place for our children.* (Woman, 44, daily wage labourer)

Besides the uncertainties, the respondents stated their disappointments of their poor living conditions and limited access to resources and facilities which inhibits their day to day activities. The overcrowded nature of the camp and its unhygienic surrounding also augmented their struggle.

They expressed their struggle to live in a confined congested shelter which constraints their individual freedom and privacy. Some of the respondents noted the need of a private space with their spouse and expressed their dissatisfaction in sharing their space with the rest.

> *You see, we are seven people in one room, mother in law, children and I don't even get a space for my husband. Even now as am talking to you, everyone is hearing including the neighbours.* (Woman, 38, daily wage labourer)

All the respondents commented on their difficulty in accessing a proper toilet and sanitation which has become an everyday hurdle. They expressed going to toilet as a process which creates anxiety in them as they have to walk past 'every men' in the camp to use the toilet. It has become a 'public embarrassment' which once used to be a private affair. Detached toilets have become a major concern for

them especially during the nights in the absence of electricity.

> *Toilet is very far way near the river... It is very embarrassing to walk past all the people outside to reach the toilet... During the nights sometimes I control (natures call) to save the troublesome process.* (Woman, 33, daily wage labourer)

Displacement has increased their gendered roles in the unpaid domestic work domain which has become more time consuming and energy draining. The respondents commented on their difficulty to carry out both unpaid domestic work as well as the economic support which is demanded from them. Some of them expressed their inability to function their expected roles with limited resources and facilities which exhausted much of their free time.

> *In the morning there is a chaos for water. I start waiting in the queue from the sunrise or else I will be late for work. If I am late I might not get work that day. It is so difficult and tiring to manage both inside (unpaid domestic work) and outside work (paid work).* (Woman, 35, daily wage labourer)

> *...I am working day and night. There is nothing else I do other than working. Sometimes I feel like running away from everything. But where to? I am so tired of this life.* (Woman, 38, daily wage labourer)

The respondents noted living in such adverse environment of the camp with fewer resources and unfulfilled needs have had negative effect on their health and well-being. It is stated that there is a general susceptibility to poor physical health and various diseases such as "cholera, diarrhoea, and measles". However for most of the respondents seeking quality health services is a process of pushing themselves into extreme poverty. In fact it is a choice between rations and health, where rations supersede health services. All the respondents noted their unpreparedness to encounter such a situation where they feel they are incapable. Displacement has taken their ability to generate additional income to meet situations other than rations. Two of the respondents noted:

> *If two of my family members get sick… what will I do? It is very hard in such situations. I am left with no options… either I buy medicines or rice.* (Woman, 40, daily wage labourer)

> *My husband is sick from past three months and I am not able to take him to hospital till now…* (Women, 52, daily wage labourer)

Their poor health and inaccessibility to quality health services have affected their productivity and income generating capacity to further entrench poverty. Some of the respondents noted their compulsion to work with poor health which further deteriorates their condition. This has eventually led them to take medicines and services which are not prescribed by authentic medical practitioners for instant relief.

> *She (pointing at the neighbour who was on a drip) is sick from past few days…*

> *going to hospital is expensive, so like her all of us go to the nearby shop to by medicines. He gives us injections and other medicines…* (Woman, 52, daily wage labourer)

Notwithstanding these adversities, the respondents expressed the desire to overcome their present condition and yearn for a better life for their children. They mention the importance of education as the only means to elevate their present status and escape from the domain of poverty to achieve development. However education has been deduced to as an "unachievable dreams" which also results in inter-generational transfer of poverty in the absence of accessibility to quality education.

> *We want our children to be engineer and doctor, but it is not possible for us. We have a lot of dreams but they are just dreams.* (Woman, 40, daily wage labourer)

> *I want my children to go to private school… even though thinking about it right now is hard to imagine. I feel in those schools the kids will be taught better and the teachers will be hard working…* (Woman, 33, daily wage labourer)

Some of the respondents expressed their dilemma in confirming to what is called the ideal depiction of a legitimate camp dweller which describes an unwritten code of what material possessions one should have or have not as a displaced. It was stated that the people here want to keep their status as a camp dweller intact[8] in the hope that someday the Government will rehabilitate and compensate for their losses. They feel that having certain needs will dissolve their status in the eyes of the "others". The respondents noted their wish to have "electricity" and own "television sets" but the presumption of being judged regarding the legitimacy of their needs as well as their status as a legitimate camp dweller abstains them from such desires. The respondents feel the need for entertainment which can be a distraction from their distressing everyday concerns.

> *...leave about owning a television, we do not even have electricity… what will I do with a television set. More over what will the people say if we own such things.* (Woman, 38, daily wage labourer)

Camp Space: Reinforcing Otherness

Living in a limited boundary of a camp space under the category of 'displaced' in itself exhibit 'otherness'[9] and distinction which further marginalizes the woman IDPs who are already excluded from the society. It is the result of the states' thoughtlessness[10] and un-problematizing character and its failure to provide a durable solution is the basis for their protracted displacement. It is evident from the ceasing of Gratuitous Relief and security which resulted in their second displacement[11] . The normalization of the camps by the state has affected their well-being. One of the probable reasons for this normalization can be the result of the prevailing social consensus[12] that most of the Bengali origin Muslims is 'illegal' Bangladeshis. The term "illegal" illustrates Muslim IDPs are different from the

rest and have broken the law. This can engender a public acceptance[13] and normalize their existence in the camp. The notion of "illegality" can also affect their accessibility to resources and services and also the awaiting rehabilitation from the government.

> *The government authorities think that all the people in the camps are Bangladeshis. The authorities have already done 3-4 document checking and we did submit all our documents. Still they allege us as Bangladeshis.* (Woman, 33, daily wage labourer).

The above mentioned quote depicts the anxiety regarding the identification process which they find it objectionable as well as disrespectful. It is the feeling of not belonging albeit the citizen of the country along with the fear of being stateless contributes to their ill well- being. One woman noted:

> *...this NRC[14] is creating panic amongst us, because when we submit the documents they do not write reports in front of us. What if they put 'D'[15](Doubtful voter) or make us Bangladeshis... we will have to suffer... we all have this fear of putting 'D' (Doubtful voter) before our name... again it will be an expenditure...even if you have proper documents you can be 'D'...this has happened to many Muslims...we will be Bangladeshis even with proper documents... The field official said that the NRC check in relief camp will be thorough because they feel there are Bangladeshis living here...* (Woman, 40, daily wage labourer)

Displacement often reduces people to mere category of "IDPs" disregarding their past[1]which is essential for rebuilding their lives. In such context where identity is reduced to mere 'displaced', being within the boundaries of camp can reinforce the notion of 'illegality" especially with the prevailing social consensus. The quote depicts their challenge to be recognized as citizens and to avail their political rights so as to overcome their present condition.

> *If I go outside the camp in search of the job, they might avoid saying that 'she is from the camp or she does not belong here'. The chance of getting a job in nearby town is very difficult for a camp person...* (Woman, 40, daily wage labourer)

> *If our men or children do slight mistake they beat them up but if the locals or rest of them do any mistakes they are forgiven. They think they can do whatever they want with us...* (Woman, 36, daily wage labourer)

The respondents noted their constant reminder of their otherness in their interaction with host community that is mostly characterised by power, inferiority, lack of respect and dignity. They feel that the camp space has created a demarcation, an insider- outsider relation which is a barrier to their assimilation albeit belonging to the same ethnic group. This demarcation has also questioned their belongingness in that particular place especially in the domain of labour market where there is competition. Some of the respondents commented on the perceived legitimacy and authority of the host community over their life and the use of power in case they deviate from their "expected" behaviour. This has

further marginalized and disempowered their existence.

Discussion

The findings indicate that displacement and life within the confined space of the camp affect the different material and nonmaterial conditions which shape the mental health of women IDPs. The quality of social determinants of mental health is being characterized within this context. It is quite clear from the broad findings of the present study that the quality of mental health and well-being of women in Hapachara camp is evidently affected by the precarious conditions created by enforced displacement.

It is understood that exploitative structure like gender is further entrenched in the context of displacement where women experience additional distress compared to the men IDPs particularly in the expected gender roles. It has been found that in addition to the traditional domestic roles, women are expected to provide economic support. Regardless of their unpaid domestic work, the additional responsibilities add much to their already distressed life. Their domestic work have become difficult and challenging with limited resources and facilities in the camp which affects their well-being.

The study indicates the role of displacement in creating disparities in health of the women where their accessibility is limited and constrained. In the absence of essential healthcare services and constrained economic conditions, women cannot afford to access the quality healthcare which is often available in private sector. The confluence of gender and their identity as Muslims of Bengali origin is a quotidian reason for 'otherness' by the process of discrimination and prejudice which is reflected in the labour market among the host community. At the same time, state's failure for a durable solution to protracted displacement has marginalized and excluded the women IDPs in general and in particular among IDPs.

Social work practice and discipline must endeavour to analyse and contain the gender dimensions of internal displacement and various factors which engender the women IDPs.

Although, inaccessibility to basic amenities can be found across different regions, countries, communities and individuals, however, the conditions created by conflict induced enforced displacement, which often reinforce and perpetuate the pre-existing inequalities or disparities that permeate many aspects of daily lives of the poor and marginalized, can be quite an ordeal. Living in such conditions can result in widespread poverty with human rights abuses; scarcity of food and clean water supplies, physical and psychological stress. It can gradually expose the population, especially women and children, to infectious as well as non-infectious diseases and can also negatively affect their health and well-being.

Conclusion

Displacement caused due to wars and armed conflicts have been the integral part of the male narratives in which female voices do not figure out anywhere, at least

as victims. This demands a pragmatic social work practice with a specialized intervention that contextualizes the lives of women in terms of displacement and considers the structural factors which create unequal status in general and displacement in particular. It is important that the required skills for effective social work practice in conflict settings needs to be well informed with new theoretical paradigms to postulate the complexities and challenges involved. The empirical data derived from the present research is a step towards in such direction.

In order to bring a paradigm shift in current social work practices, it is essential that social work discipline and pedagogy be informed with new critical perspectives that could address the gender aspects of displacement and conflict and the long term effects it has on mental health and well-being of women living in displacement camps. Evidence elucidates the ineffectiveness of social work practice based on general curriculum in social work education that supposedly demands a specialized approach. Further social work education can be added with tested principles from the field of displacement which can substantiate a new pedagogy in social work education.

As Howe (2009, p. 5) rightly points out that "if good practice is driven by sound knowledge, then social workers need to know an awful lot of very different things… To practice well, social workers have to think well, and to think well, they have to know a good deal…something of the many disciplines that have tried to make sense of human experience." Therefore, to have an effective social work intervention, it essential to bridge the gap between social work education and professional social work practice by adding critical perspectives on contemporary social issues in social work discipline.

End Notes

[1]The IDPs are people who are displaced within the borders of the country under the state jurisdiction.

[2]See Hussain (2000)

[3]Leary (2010) explain it as "theories of knowledge that emphasize that the world is constructed by human beings as they interact and engage in interpretation". Also see Creswell (2009).

[4]Schutt (2009) explains it as "seeks to find out how people get along in the setting under question, what meanings they give to their actions and what issues concern them"

[5]It was observed from the field that two decades of displacement have made some of them lose hope on any such studies and the possible outcome of the study for their well-being. The participants also explained about the several studies conducted on them and the delay in the outcome.

[6] It was informed from the field that there were instances where some studies were written against their well-being which they feel that questions their identity as a displaced.

[7] The researchers share one of the status characteristics (religious identity) of the community.

[8]Many residents of the camp have migrated to different parts of the country in search of a better living who are mostly hidden in status.

[9]Weis (1995) explains othering is a process "'serves to mark and name those thought to be different from oneself'', which is experienced as a process of "marginalization, disempowerment and social exclusion" (cited in Grove &Zwi, 2006).

[10]Refers to the states' consideration of displacement as an accepted phenomenon. For details see Oslender (2016).

[11] See (Goswami, 2008) for more details

[12] Ibid

[13] Grove &Zwi (2006) explains how terms like "illegal" can contribute to the public acceptance of detention and containing them in camps and other closed physical space in way shifting the focus from "protection of the refugees, to protection from the refugees". Though it is explained in the context of refugees, it is very much applicable in this case of internal displacement.

[14]NRC denotes to National Register of Citizens.

[15] It is a category who has "been declared doubtful by the Election Commission". However report says that in 2012 out of 88192 D-voter cases only 6590 were found foreigners (Sharma, 2014).

[16]Donny Meertens (2000; cited in Oslender,2016) explains "…officials who often try to reduce them to a common denominator of 'displaced,' thereby converting their specific past into something irrelevant or even dubious, and failing to realize that the identity of refugees is rooted more in what they were and less in what they have been converted into".

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SOCIAL WORK JOURNAL
(BI-ANNUAL)
ISSN 0976-5484
6 (1) January–June 2015, pp. 90–102

Fieldwork as Signature Pedagogy of Social Work Education: As I see it!

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Lee Shulman (as cited in Wayne, Bogo, & Raskin, 2010) defines signature pedagogy as the type of teaching that organizes the fundamental ways in which future practitioners are educated for their new professions. Fieldwork is seen as the signature pedagogy of social work education. In other words, fieldwork is an important and integral component of social work education. Thus, social work education comprises of both theoretical learning through classroom teaching and experiential learning through field practice. This article examines the various components of fieldwork at the Department of Social work, University of Delhi and the changes in the fieldwork practicum under the semester system.

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Introduction

It is interesting to see that social work as a concept has evolved from a simple phrase 'social work helps people so that they can help themselves' to a more comprehensive global definition which states that, "Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing"(IFSW & IASSW, 2014).To attain these goals it is important that the curriculum of social work has both a theoretical course structure, and a planned and supervised fieldwork practicum.

A supervised fieldwork practicum helps the students to develop requisite skills for working with people. Supervised fieldwork training helps to build students' capacities and enables them to apply social work theory to real life situations in social service agencies or in communities. The practicum is

considered necessary to prepare the students to perform practice roles. A number of scholars have suggested that classroom based cognitive education needs to be integrated with practical field experience in order to teach professional practice skills (Caspi & Reid, 2002). With this perspective, the fieldwork practicum was formulated at the Department of Social Work (DSW), University of Delhi (DU). DSW had, for years, a generic and annual mode of education which was changed to the semester mode, and the first batch graduated in the year 2011 under the semester system.

Fieldwork in Social Work and its Significance

Recommendations of a workshop at the Department of Social Work, DU (1981), highlight the field as, the situation in which social work has got a professional concern and which provides opportunities for positive learning experiences through guided interaction in the areas of need, problems, resources and requisite action. A document published as early as 1957, by the Delhi School of Social Work, titled *'Fieldwork supervision: in an Indian school of social work'*, highlighted the importance of *practice* in Social Work:

> Essentially social work skills are concerned with problem solving and as such they rest upon knowledge contained in the social and biological sciences pertaining to man and society. This knowledge is gained partly in the didactic sessions of the curriculum but it becomes meaningful only when the student has to test it in situation after situation in the field. Thus it can be seen that the practical experience must be closely integrated at every step of the way with what the student learns in the classroom (Gore, 1957, p. 3)

The term 'fieldwork' can be defined in various ways depending upon the context of the situation. Wayne, Bogo and Raskin (2010) mention field education as the 'signature pedagogy' (a term coined by Lee Shulman) of social work profession. Quoting the Council of Social Work Education (CSWE) the authors say that "signature pedagogy is a central form of instruction and learning to socialize students to perform the role of the practitioner and impart pedagogical norms with which to connect and integrate theory and practice (ibid., p. 8)". According to them the students engaged in field education are not entirely invisible as they have assigned roles involving other people and they are accountable for their work. Students while interacting in the field may be subjective in their perceptions, unaware of their non-verbal behavior, may have faulty recall of their experience and may neglect significant moments or may offer a skewed report of their experience. To assess the student's ability to perform the core functions of the profession effectively, instructors must examine their interaction in practice situations.

Hamilton and Else (as cited in Dhemba, 2010) define fieldwork in social work as a consciously planned set of experiences occurring in a practice setting designed to move students from their initial level of understanding, skills and attitudes to levels associated with autonomous social work practice. In their fieldwork manual Twikirize and Tusasiirwe (2015) express views on fieldwork

saying that, "Fieldwork placements represent a laboratory where theories taught at the university are tested and practiced under the supervision of a qualified practitioner, for the student to acquire skills" (pp. 5–6)."Fieldwork placement is a critical method and phase of social work instruction, which provides the student with the opportunity of integrating classroom knowledge with experiential learning in a relevant social work setting. While acquiring the experience, a student is supervised by professional staff members of the agencies and supervisors from the academic institution" (ibid., p. 5).

According to I. S. Subhedar (2001),

> Fieldwork in social work education refers to training and education . . . . It consists of accumulating knowledge in different situations. It is a dynamic process of observing, amassing and implementing creative and innovative ideas. Moreover, it fosters the development of intellectual and emotional processes and attitudes [. . . .] Fieldwork programme provides an opportunity to the students to apply their theoretical knowledge taught in the classroom appropriately in different practical situations (pp. 22–23).

Each one of the above mentioned explanations reinforces the fact that field work in social work is beyond the 'doing without knowing' approach. It is a platform where the students practice the classroom learning of human behavior, social structures, data collection and analysis in practice to understand the problem and arrive at a plan of action. This evidence based knowledge equips them to devise genuine plan of action appropriate to the situation.

Components of Fieldwork Programme

This section traces the various components included under the fieldwork programme of some of the schools of social work in other countries. Subsequently it mentions the broad common components of fieldwork of Indian institutions of social work education. Finally, it focuses on fieldwork as practiced in Department of Social Work, University of Delhi, one of the pioneer institutions of social work education in India.

The study conducted by Dhema (2012) was found very useful for this section as it covered the fieldwork model of three schools of social work, namely Institute of Social Work (ISW), Tanzania; National University of Lesotho and University of Zimbabwe. As per the study, the various forms of fieldwork in the social work institutions include concurrent, block, a combination of concurrent and block and, in- service placements. Under concurrent field work, simultaneous fieldwork with classroom instruction is programmed in such a way that in a week the student spends few days in field and few in class, depending upon the institution. A block placement means a full time engagement of the social work student at a field work agency for a duration ranging anything from one month to one year depending on the institution of the student. The in-service placement which is a less popular concept provides social work training in job to those already working. As per the study ISW has both concurrent and block placements in field work.

The block placement occurs in the third year for a period of three months.

The National University of Lesotho has block placements at the undergraduate level and concurrent field work at the post graduate level. The block placement occurs in second year for a month and in the third and fourth year for a period of two months respectively. University of Zimbabwe organizes block placement in the second and the third year for durations of three months and three weeks respectively.

In most of the institutions of social work education the fieldwork programme at the Masters level comprises of various components namely- orientation programme, concurrent fieldwork, rural camp/ study tours, block placement. These components are supervised and evaluated. The fieldwork unit is coordinated/headed by a faculty under the designation of 'Director, Fieldwork and Placements' or 'Fieldwork Coordinator'.

Job placements, although not a part of fieldwork programme, are an important responsibility of the fieldwork director at the Department of Social Work (DSW), University of Delhi. Similarly, other activities such as inter agency meet, regular workshops/ interactions with the faculty form an inherent part of the directorial responsibility. Though there have been deliberations that to effectively coordinate and implement the various components, the fieldwork unit should be assigned a full time experienced person but in DSW this responsibility continues to be shouldered by the teaching faculty of the department who are co-partners in the smooth running of fieldwork activities. The position is rotated among the faculty members as per the seniority and with relaxation of the number of students allocated to the director.

At DSW, components of field work practice have evolved over a period of time. The components of fieldwork practice from mid 1980s include- orientation programme, concurrent fieldwork, and block placement. Efforts were made to place students in jobs but it was not mandatory by way of placement brochure and percentage of placements. Rural camp which probably existed in the earlier years prior to 1980s was once again added during the 1990s at the time of curriculum revision and around 2004 the Supportive Field Instructions Programme (SFIP) was formally added to the list of fieldwork components. The concurrent fieldwork was assigned marks while the student's performance on other components was observed by way of their attendance and participation, The components as practiced at DSW from the mid 1980s are explained as below:

1. Orientation Programme
2. Concurrent Fieldwork
3. Group Conferences
4. Supportive Field Instructions Programme
5. Rural Camp
6. Block Placement
7. Winter Placement (Optional)
8. Job Placement

Orientation Programme

The orientation programme is organized for students of both the semesters in the month of July, depending upon the University opening schedule. The new entrants are inducted into the course through the ten days programme by providing information about the course structure offered and about the fieldwork programme. This is important because the students admitted to the DSW come from various disciplines, socio- economic backgrounds and from various parts of the country. Hence, the objective of the programme is to orient the students to the course structure, that is, the papers offered, their content, the fieldwork and the placement agencies, report writing, to the ongoing extension and demonstration projects of the department and to the faculty, staff and the students. This is combined with exposure visits to the agencies and culminates with an *outing/ picnic* now shifted to an indoor celebration within the Department since past few years due to the bad weather around this time of the year. The third semester orientation aims at sharpening understanding of the field and the focus areas for the social workers in the Indian setting specifically. This is done through lectures and interactions with the practitioners invited as resource persons to the department. The aim is to facilitate understanding of the role of the social worker and the various settings in which they could work.

Each aspect of the orientation programme is thoughtfully designed by the faculty to facilitate professional learning of the student. For instance, the *outing/ picnic* unlike the meaning conveyed carried learning opportunities for both the students and the faculty and was an important aspect of the orientation programme. Every faculty along with the new entrants was part of this practice, the idea being to create an atmosphere of togetherness after the ten days long orientation for the new entrants. This was also the time for the faculty to observe the students and assess whether the student allocated to the agency was suitable for the setting. The list was shared by the Director, fieldwork informally with the faculty prior to the outing. The concurrent fieldwork made an effort to place each student in the setting appropriate for him/ her to the extent possible. One of the senior professors (now retired) even went through the autobiographical statement of the students so closely as to understand even the kind of supervision the student requires so as to avoid any mid-way dropping from the course due to fieldwork.

Concurrent Field Work

Concurrent is the core component of fieldwork in social work education which provides the students opportunity to develop their intervention skills using integration of theory into practice. Concurrent fieldwork is for both the academic years of post-graduate programme. Under this component every student is assigned a setting for the entire year along with the learning objective. The placement of the student can be either in an agency or a community or in a community through an agency. The students visit the respective field setting every Tuesday and Thursday, spending a minimum of 6–8 hours per visit and under the guidance of a faculty supervisor and an agency supervisor (in case of agency

placement). On the other four days they attend the classes at the department. Both government agencies/organizations and NGOs which offer scope for students' learning and growth in the social sector are selected for concurrent fieldwork placements. Preference is given to those organizations which have one or more positions for a social worker in their administrative staff. However, organizations without such position but which offer good work exposure to the social work trainees are also considered for concurrent fieldwork placements. Individual conferences are an integral part of the concurrent fieldwork wherein the supervisee and the supervisor collectively meet once a week for allotted time of half an hour to discuss the progress of their work.

Allocation of the field setting and faculty supervisor has always been the primary task of the 'Director Fieldwork' and the team assisting him/her. For the students, getting to know the agency and the supervisor allocated to them was and continues to be a very important as the engagement with the allocated faculty supervisor by way of individual conferences, fortnightly evaluation of the work by the supervisor, supervisory field visits, group conferences every alternate Fridays, etc. was direct and continuous.

Evaluation: The evaluation process has changed over a period of time in response to the challenges faced in the field by the students and the faculty. For instance the fortnightly evaluation system was gradually shifted to the monthly evaluation format. Under the fortnightly evaluations the work progress of the student was evaluated in writing through a proforma every fortnightly by the faculty supervisor. The evaluation of the student's work was done on various parameters such as progress on the work, regularity and punctuality maintained in the field and related assignments, quality of reports submitted, regularity and punctuality of the student in the individual and group conferences, use of classroom learning in the field along with skills and principles of social work practice. Fortnightly evaluation was a powerful tool which kept the students updated on their progress as it also checked irregular students through issuing of memo by the faculty supervisor. This format of evaluation existed till mid-2000 and thereafter was changed to monthly evaluations. Under the monthly evaluation the work progress of the student was evaluated on same parameters but after 30 days and this practice continued till 2012.

Group Conferences (GCs)

The GCs are an important component in social work education in general and field work in specific. They enable students to undergo a wide range of experiences in a structured and controlled setting and is a successful medium of fieldwork learning. It trains the students into reflecting on their fieldwork, selecting a field situation for sharing at a wider forum extending beyond their respective supervisors, preparation of a formal paper, distribution of the paper on time, and performing the roles of presenter, chairperson and recorder on fortnightly basis. GCs were held every Friday afternoon, alternatively, for both the years and for one and a half hour with a group of approximately 15 students placed under three

to four teachers who would be the resource persons. These conferences would start around September after the students had been in the field for a month. Under the GCs the students were expected to present their paper finalized in consultation with their supervisor. The practice of GCs was a feature of the annual mode and was practiced briefly in the semester mode till the year 2011.

Supportive Field Instructions Programme (SFIP)

The SFIP was started with the objective of widening the student's perspective of the field realities. This was done by providing them a platform for interaction with the practitioners and distinguished persons to share their experiences. The aim also was to add to their body of knowledge, their skills, to keep them informed about the latest developments in the field. The programme was started in the annual mode.

Rural Camp

The rural camp aims to provide an exposure to the students on the rural life and the related issues faced by them and to the kind of challenges faced by rural India. The rural camp was held in the second year under the annual mode and in the third semester under the semester mode in the month of December after the termination of the exams. The methodology adopted for organizing the camp was in partnership with organizations working in the social sector especially those which could provide the necessary logistical arrangements (on payment basis) besides a fruitful exposure to the students. Earlier with a reasonable batch of around 55 students logistics was manageable which gradually became difficult due to the increased size going upto 75 to 80 students per batch. The camp besides providing a rural or a semi-rural exposure facilitated good bonding among the students including building team spirit, undertaking leadership roles, developing sensitivity to the needs of peer group and the field.

Block Placement and Winter Placement

The block placement programme includes training of the students in a particular setting of their choice for a continuous duration of 30-45 days without faculty supervision. This programme was initiated to provide the students with an exposure to job employment and the intricacies involved therein. Under the annual mode the block placement had to be completed after the completion of the second year exams. The students choose an organization of their choice keeping in mind the nature of work expected from them. The block placement is without a supervisor and it is left to the student to work as per his/her understanding. They are expected to submit logsheets (indicating progress of their work) on weekly basis to fieldwork unit. Under the annual mode the block placements were neither evaluated nor marked. Under the semester system the block placement has been given a weightage of 100 marks to be evaluated through a viva voce examination.

The winter placements are optional for the students. Under this the interested

students can decide on 15 days placement every year during the month of December to enhance their learning skills.

Job Placements

Though the job placements are not considered as a component of fieldwork practicum, but in DSW, it forms a very important component of the Field Work Unit and for the Director Fieldwork. The job placements started formally in mid 1990s and have gradually expanded to ensure maximum placements of the students. The inception of a placement cell during mid-90s in the department was a wise decision. Bringing out a placement brochure featuring CVs of students and mailing it to possible employers was another good initiative undertaken by the fieldwork unit.

A Transitional Period: 2010–2013*

This period can be seen as transitional as during this period the Department saw a shift from the annual mode of education to the semester system. This posed newer challenges by way of new courses and a revised curriculum which had major implications on the fieldwork practicum traced in this section. Table 1 (below) delineates the changes introduced during this phase in the signature pedagogy of social work that is fieldwork.

Table 1: Overview of the changes in fieldwork practicum and its impact

S.No	Fieldwork Component	Present Status	Impact*	
			Strengths	***Current Challenges***
1.	Concurrent: Tuesday and Thursday	(i) Concurrent: Tuesday and Thursday continues (ii) Monthly evaluation removed. Only End Semester evaluation in November/ December (iii) Evaluation Performa revised	(i) Platform for regular integration of theory and practice; (ii) Exposure to field settings throughout the year	(i) Only two day presence in agency/ community (ii) End semester evaluation lacks student monitoring and evaluation on regular basis (iii) New Performa is repetitive and verbose
2.	Group Conferences (GCs): Every alternate Friday for each batch and for entire year	Students Conference: Once in a year per batch	Formal exposure to the roles of presenter, recorder, chairperson continues	(i) Inhibits active student participation and learning; ii) Hampers continuous exchange of ideas among peer group in a formal setting; (iii) Presentations are less reflective of field situation and more theoretical
3.	Rural Camp: December and one agency	Rural Camp: October and one agency	Cordial weather and less health hassles; less liability on agency; better field learning	Less faculty participation due to mid semester break
4.	SFIP: Every week for both semesters	Discontinued	The slot was used for classes	Impacted student exposure to interaction with practitioners

**Analysis in this section is based on the author's personal views.*

Concurrent Fieldwork: The alternate model that came up as a proposal to concurrent placement (Tuesdays and Thursdays) was 'block placement'. This meant placement for a month in any one setting which would suffice the field requirement of 27-30 days. The suggestion went bleak on various grounds firstly; it was not practical to supervise students beyond NCR. The possibility of using technology/skype for supervision was not considered practical due to poor network connectivity in many parts of the country particularly in the rural areas. Block placement was anyways an existing component of fieldwork at the department wherein the students did get an opportunity for a month continuous placement in the field after the second semester.

Students' choice for concurrent placements: The practice that started in 2000 gave students the freedom to suggest the areas of their choice for the concurrent placement to the field work unit. This practice was discontinued due to the increased strength of students and related administrative hurdles. Secondly, there was absence of accurate records with the fieldwork unit related to the agencies. Thirdly, there had been cases where despite the best efforts of the fieldwork unit there were cases of student dissatisfaction regarding their placement on basis of their area of their interest. Placing the students as per their elective also was a good idea but not feasible.

Students' Evaluations: As mentioned above, the fortnightly evaluation system had gradually changed to the monthly evaluations and finally to the End Semester Evaluation format. The justification for the change was that the semester system curriculum was heavily packed with additional number of courses thus making it not feasible to continue with the ongoing practice of fieldwork evaluation. It was also justified on the grounds that a month was too small a period to assess a student's performance especially for those students who were either irregular or slow to understand the requirements of fieldwork. The counter arguments supported the benefits of regular evaluation. The new evaluation system which comprises of only the End Semester Evaluation fits well into the semester format but leaves space for periodic monitoring. Also, the new Proforma needs to be simplified for the benefit of the students who come with different competence levels with regard to medium of instruction and writing skills.

Group Conferences to Students Conferences: The Group Conference was changed to 'Students Conference'. The changed system includes presentation of the papers on two days by the students and in two large groups, per batch. It was decided that, based on a pre-determined criteria, few papers would be selected for final presentations. Though the idea was to promote competition among students so that they strive for excellence, somewhere the essence of equal learning opportunity for every student got lost the in the entire endeavor. Thus, it was decided to have presentations from all the students.

The new format for paper presentation is comprehensive and includes review of literature, reflection on theoretical paradigms, and on the nature of engagement

of the student. The students are free to consult any faculty for their paper which is a shift from the earlier pattern of preparing the paper under the guidance of the allocated supervisor. While the new format provides wider space to the students in planning their paper and nurtures reading habits but in the process the papers have become theoretical and fail to reflect on the learning in the field. Also the continuous learning which was an integral part of the earlier format seems dwindled making the new system become symbolic and ritualistic.

Rural Camp: The increase in the number of students did pose a challenge of continuing the practice of taking all the students to one organization for rural camp. There were suggestions for taking the students to different locations in groups of two or three or may be even more but the freedom of choice rested with the Director Fieldwork. The pattern for rural camp which was continued till July 2013 included taking all the students to one organization and if required split them to two different project sites. This format of being together for an outdoor learning trip was continued for various reasons enhancement of inter-personal relationships among the students along with mutual learning as well building the spirit of team work amongst students. Students reported back with positive results of more cordial relationship and learning to work in teams. The effort that went into identifying the agencies which were willing to host a large number of students and which could provide requisite exposure was quite herculean.

In order to facilitate the students' learning through the camp and to avoid becoming a liability on the host organization, the rural camp since 2011 was shifted to the month of October instead of December. This change facilitated better organization of the rural camp primarily due to friendly weather conditions. However, the non-availability of the faculty due to mid semester break and other academic engagements related to semester system acted as a limitation. Nevertheless it was managed well with the support of available faculty members.

Supportive Field Instructions Programme (SFIP): The practice of supportive field instructions was stopped as it was felt that under the semester system there was a need to complete the courses that required taking additional classes. Hence allocating slot for SFIP was not feasible. Only one programme was organized in the entire three years.

Job Placements

Though not a part of the fieldwork practicum, job placements form a vital responsibility of the Director, Fieldwork. A detailed programme was hence planned for job placements from 2011 onwards which was improvised further in next two years:

1. Democratic selection of placement committee on the last day of the week long orientation programme, that is, the last day of the week long orientation programme, for the third semester students. The committee comprised of one Director of placements and 4 to 5 students.
2. Profiling of the students by September end. This was a demanding task as it

required continuous follow-up with the students. While most students complied but a falter by even one delayed the process.

3. Getting the permission from the university for getting the prospectus published by a private printer.
4. Getting the first draft of the Placement Brochure latest by mid-November and subsequent printing of the brochure after corrections additions.
5. Hosting a four-day placement fair (that started in 2010) to invite maximum organizations for recruitment within a given time period.
6. A policy decision was taken that once a student is selected for two jobs he/she cannot sit for the third one. Later this was revised to one person one job so as to accommodate and secure job placement for most of the students.
7. Though only those organizations offering a remuneration of at least Rs. 15,000 per month were entertained by way of calling them for pre-placement talk (PPT).However, in reality a minimum of Rs. 20,000 per month was the quoted salary to the organizations. At the same time, students were apprised of the organizations so that even if one of the students got interested seeing the perks and nature of work, it was worth it. Spinal Cord Injuries is one such organization which paid less but was good by way of the perks and health benefits that it offered.
8. Presence of the Director Fieldwork for all the days when the organizations came to ensure smooth functioning was essential.

The entire placements were done by the four member student committee along with the Director, Fieldwork. There were many occasions where the salary had to be negotiated and the work expected from a social work student had to be defined and revisited by the placement committee to the prospective employer. CSR initiatives lacked a well-defined role for social work students, which were then discussed with the teams who came for placement and also with the higher level authorities of those organizations.

Besides NGOs, schools and hospital settings, the list was extended to include corporate houses, which were by now mandated to contribute two per cent of company profits for CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) initiatives. So companies like Yamaha, Maruti Suzuki, Moser Baer, Taj Safari, Airtel, Tata Power Division, Hindustan Zinc among others came for campus recruitments.

The establishment of a well-structured placement cell helped to grab employment opportunities for the social work students with the expansion in the scope of social work practice in various settings besides the CSR initiatives of companies. For instance, corporate sector (welfare officers and deputy managers in Hero Honda, Hero Motorcorp, etc.), private sector social enterprises (project executives in Empower Pragati, New Concept Information, etc.), scholarship programmes (national and international foundations like America India Foundation, Gandhi Fellows, etc.), schools (school social worker), hospitals (medial social workers) as well as positions in international organizations.

Lastly, the Department was ranked number two by Outlook-MDRA survey, 2013, and job placements of the students were an important parameter in the ranking criteria. In 2010–11, the average salary was below Rs.3 lakh per annum. In 2012-13, it went above Rs.3 lakh per annum. With the entry of first-rate

corporate houses in the job arena, the NGOs also started to offer more competitive salaries to the students (The Hindu, 2013).

Proposed Model

A model with few modifications to the existing fieldwork practicum is proposed in Table 2.

Table 2: Proposed Model for Fieldwork Practicum

Fieldwork component	Present format	Remarks	Proposed format
Concurrent Fieldwork	Tuesdays and Thursdays	Student exposure to field setting for entire year	Continue with existing model
Block Placement	i. After second semester ii. Without faculty supervision iii. Evaluated for 100 marks with Viva Voce	i. Provides exposure to a setting and regular supervision in third semester facilitates better field learning ii.100 marks in hands of external examiner may not be justified for 15 minutes viva voce	i. Continue ii. Faculty allocation will facilitate guidance whenever required by student. and for evaluation of students work. iii. 50 marks viva voce and 50 marks assessment by allocated faculty
Rural Camp	December Not marked	December has weather extremes which is neither student friendly nor host agency friendly. October is more weather friendly.	October during mid semester break. Preparing a Roster will facilitate faculty participation. Marking not necessary
Group Conferences	Students Seminar	Ritualistic thereby limiting student learning	The original model of GC be implemented.
Evaluation format	End Semester Evaluation	Repetitive and exhausting Performa	i. Fortnightly evaluation ii. Performa should be objective and not take more than 5 minutes to fill. iii. End semester evaluation continues iv. Performa to be made easy on English and duplication to be avoided

Conclusion

Importance of field work in social work education gets reinforced with the ongoing debates and efforts to strengthen the programme as per the newer requirements and changing perspectives of the new and old faculty. The beauty lies in not letting the past go but restructuring the past with the new requirements. For fieldwork to continue as signature pedagogy of social work education it is important that the various components are framed to support each other and facilitate the students' learning. The process of deliberations and discussions in context of the perceived

changing scenario may disturb the established format or may strengthen the fieldwork programme through the induced changes. It is thus important to be sensitive to the situations and be ensured that student learning is not adversely affected.

Note

*The author was the Director Fieldwork and Placements from 2010 to 2013

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SOCIAL WORK JOURNAL
(BI-ANNUAL)
ISSN 0976-5484
6 (1) January–June 2015, pp. 103–113

Social Work Education for Undergraduate Students : Issues and Challenges in Field Work

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Social work is a practice based discipline. It has two components- theory and field work practicum. Social work education offers a student to deal with real life situations by using theoretical knowledge, develops capability to work with people at different levels and to design interventions aimed at improving human conditions. The present article revisits the modalities and structure of field work practicum. It sheds light on certain practices that could improve field work practicum. The paper also highlights the role of supervisors and discusses certain dilemmas and challenges that they may face during supervision of students at undergraduate level. The emphasis of this discussion is on the openness of supervisor towards new situations, experiences and challenges; and on the dialogue process with the social work students.

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Introduction

We are sometimes like "frogs in a well" with limited knowledge acquired through the immediate family and environment that we live in. We can expand our knowledge only when we interact with different social and cultural milieus. Keeping this in mind, field work practicum is an integral part of social work education at the undergraduate and post graduate level. The Social Work syllabus has two core components –Theory and Field Work practicum. The fact that field work is an integral part of the subject is indubitable.

Field work, as defined by Singh (1985) " is a guided interaction process where a student comes across a situation where social work profession has a concern and which needs intervention to improve human conditions"(p. 43).

This implies that field work is a guided process where a student faces real life situations and he/she is given constant guidance by his supervisor to act and ameliorate the taxing and dysfunctional situations, at both individual and community levels.

The broad objectives of Field work can be summarised as follows-helping students acquire knowledge of different social structures and situations so that they develop the ability to observe and analyze social realities and identify situations where social work intervention is needed; enhancing sensitivity of the students towards the marginalised sections of society by drawing attention to the aspects of human rights and social justice; and hence also helping students appreciate the relevance of legislations and various policies of development. According to UGC (2001, p.98), fieldwork also aims to develop and enhance a student's "understanding of the organization structure, various programme of intervention, resource management" while participating in the effort at various levels. Further, field work helps students in developing necessary skills and competences to work with people at different levels ranging from individual client to communities or issues affecting larger section of the society. It also helps to develop a professional approach which encompasses all the three components i.e. knowledge, skills and attitude (Delhi University, 2015; Jamia Millia Islamia University (JMI), 2015; Singh, 1985).

Field work motivates the student to internalise the values and principles he/she has read. Whenever a student comes across a new and a different situation in the field, he/she faces internal conflict which provides an opportunity to introspect one's emotions and beliefs thereby bringing a change in his/her behaviour. This enables the student to become a sensitive and socially accountable professional. These aspects become very significant at undergraduate level.

An undergraduate programme in Social work which is of three years is offered after the completion of 10+2 years of schooling. A student at an undergraduate level is often highly dependent and his/her problem solving capacity is yet evolving as he/she is coming from a protective and structured environment of school. As he encounters the 'field' in Social work education, he may often find situations to be challenging and very different from what he expected. Field work sometimes puts students in a highly unstructured and open environment which initially creates anxiety and conflicting situations among students. This paper focuses on issues and concerns related to supervision of undergraduate students of social work. Perspectives presented in this paper are based on my observations and experiences as a fieldwork supervisor for undergraduate students of social work in one of the colleges of University of Delhi.

The first section discusses major areas of concerns in field work and few practices which could help in enhancing the quality of field work and learning among undergraduate students. The paper also discusses role, characteristics of Field supervisor. In the later section, paper highlights certain challenges and dilemma that a supervisor may encounter while dealing with the undergraduate students.

Major areas of concern in field work

Field work in social work education is given special importance and most of the schools have a systematic curriculum for it. However, a few institutions do not

give much importance to the field work and they lack well defined curriculum and practices for field work. A uniform minimum standard for curriculum is yet to be achieved across the country (Botcha, 2012; UGC, 1980; n.d, Shodganga). In this section, I discuss some of the key aspects that contribute to learning process of social work students. Although many of these aspects are already in place, here are my reflections on what could further improve their application for social work students at the undergraduate level.

Social work educator: According to the UGC curriculum 2001, besides teaching theory, Social Work Educator is also responsible for Field work supervision and research activities in the schools. Social work educators have an important role to play in the development of Social work practice skills and knowledge among students. Besides having a well defined curriculum in field work, it is equally important to have a good infrastructure and uniform guidelines for recruitment of Social Work educators to maintain quality of Social work education and practice. This aspect is compromised in many institutions (across India) where faculty is drawn from other disciplines of social sciences as well (Shodganga; UGC 1980). Towards this end, National Council of professional Social Work in India (NCPSWI), Bill 1993 defines "*Social work educator* as person who holds prescribed social work qualification and has been involved in teaching and research in the recognised social work institution university". But the issue regarding the quality of Social Work educator has not been adequately addressed yet. UGC regulations on minimum qualification for appointment of teachers, 2010, do not clearly specify qualifications for faculty engaged in Social work discipline in various universities and institutes. It yet needs to incorporate and specify the qualifications in Gazette, for example, a degree in Master of Social Work or M.A. in Social Work. Measures like these will strengthen social work education and profession in general, and field work in social work education in particular.

Components of fieldwork: There is disparity in field work structure and components across various schools in terms of importance given to field work practicum in their curriculum. However, most widely existent and accepted structure &components of field work prescribed by universities as well as UGC Social Work Education Model Curriculum Report, 2001 involve- orientation programmes and observation visits[1]; concurrent field work[2]; Inter-agency meet[3]; Field work supervision which includes weekly individual conferences [4]& group conferences[5]; rural camp or educational camp[6]; skill development work-shop[7]; self evaluation[8];and finally, block placement[9] (Delhi University, 2015; Jamia Millia Islamia University, 2015;UGC, 2001)

This however may not be enough for undergraduate students. *Induction meetings*, just after the orientation programme and before the commencement of the concurrent field work, could be held by the respective supervisors with the group of all supervisees in order to inform them in detail about expected behaviour in the field and the structure of the evaluation process. Some of the behaviours expected from students in their field work have been mentioned in the Delhi University syllabus of 2015 but some are yet to be recognised and written down in

the rules. E.g. no dissemination of information to anyone without prior consent which could lead to the breach of confidentiality of the client and agency; not exploiting the client and his/her family; not misusing the resources of the agency for one's personal gain; no falsification of documents in agency records and field work reports; there can be no physical conflict with the client or any member of the agency. Lack of punctuality is also a major area of concern which adversely affects the relationship of the university with the agency (Delhi University, 2015). Besides this, there are few more points which need to be emphasized for students. For example, differences in education should not negatively impact the student's interaction with others working in the field i.e. every individual from the grass root level to the management level should be accorded equal respect; no action can be taken unilaterally by the student without consultation with and authorization by the agency and the supervisor, for instance, signing of documents & any initiative which he/she feels in the interest of the client; taking leave with prior intimation to the supervisor and the agency concerned.

Selection of fieldwork site: Selection of an agency and the field needs careful consideration. During selection of field, following points to needs to be taken care of - "The philosophy of agency should be in consistent with values and ethics of social work profession and fulfil objectives of social work curriculum" (Delhi University, 2015, p.13). The agency should give comprehensive opportunity to learn and understand social processes. It should also provide suitable time and resources to a social work trainee. The agency should have a trained social worker and provide an experienced staff as a field work supervisor who can direct and monitor students' activities frequently. In order to give diverse experiences to the students; they should be placed in the institutional and in the non-institutional set up during two different years of the course. During selection of field, the distance between the residence of a student and the field should be considered. The language barrier of the student should be taken note of during placement (Delhi University, 2015; Jamia Millia Islamia University, 2015; Kumar, 2011). At the undergraduate level, a group of two to three students should be placed in one site/field. In this way, they learn to work in a team and adjust with the fellow workers (Kumar, 2011). This also ensures that interest and enthusiasm among students is retained, especially among the students enrolled in an undergraduate programme of social work. Peer support encourages and sustains students' interest, enthusiasm in their work and also instils confidence in them.

Within processes such as *group conferences*, generally it has been observed that those students who are more vocal are given more opportunities in different roles such as presenter, chairperson and recorder during several sessions. Sometimes students, who are sincere and keen on pursuing social work as a profession but not skilled orators, are sidelined. All supervisors must encourage engagement of all the students and in various roles. To ensure complete and regular active participation of all the students, some marks perhaps could be allotted for this exercise as it is essential to the development of each and every individual.

Rural camp: It is also one of the components of fieldwork as shared earlier in this section. The purpose behind such a camp is to expose students of social work trainee to the realities of rural life. This helps student to understand the socio-economic, political and cultural aspects of rural communities and associated issues and challenges. (Delhi University, 2015, Jamia Millia Islamia University, 2015). Certain aspects could be emphasized upon while *organising rural camps*. Living with the villagers closely in open camps would widen students' horizons while teaching them alternative and sustainable ways of living, helping them introspect on their comfort zones and also understanding the problems and hence coming up with solutions to ensure a better quality of life for the villagers. Institutional accommodation could be avoided in making the arrangements for staying at the site.

Evaluation: In terms of the *evaluation process*, weekly reports& interactions during Individual conferences and self evaluation forms provides the basis for constant evaluation. There are two core areas for evaluation, namely *work habits* and development of knowledge & skills. It has been observed that external skill and knowledge (i.e. writing skills, interviewing skill, observation of client's behaviour and environment, communication and interpersonal skill, knowledge of agency, communities& theoretical concepts) are given more importance to evaluate professional development of students. However, knowledge about self is also an important and implicit process in one's professional development. External skills and knowledge about self are two important dimensions towards professional development of a social worker. In *weekly reports* & *self evaluation form*, rather than writing only the theoretical principles involved, the student should also give a detailed description of changes in his perception and beliefs over the period of time in view of the code of conduct of the social work profession. This description could include the student's awareness of his/her emotional response to various situations; conflicts experienced during various situations in the field and application of social work principles to resolve the conflicts. A student needs to constantly observe and carefully examine his thoughts and feelings during field work. This would be a step towards self awareness. Self awareness will enhance a person's adherence to the values and principles of social work profession. Self-awareness is of prime importance to the supervisee and practitioner as the problem of client can affect the emotional well being of a worker and this in turn can adversely affect the helping relationship (Kaudshin & Harkness, 2002).

In order to achieve self-awareness, few classes on yoga and meditation techniques could be introduced and encouraged for all the students of social work as it would enable to pay attention and check their thought processes during interaction in the field and personal life situations. According to me, this could contribute to a healthy life. Perhaps these sessions could be included in the skill development workshops. Books on works of eminent spiritual thinkers could also be included in the reading list of the syllabus of the subject of Social Work. In the next section, I have discussed aspects specific to supervision of students.

Role of Supervisor and challenges in Supervision

In the curriculum of Social Work education, the tradition of supervision in field work has been borrowed from charity organisations wherein volunteers offered help under the direction of paid agents. Paid agents were primarily responsible for supervision of volunteers and used to be an important link between the first line worker and the administration. Supervision in Social work education also draws its inspiration from the tradition of Case work. The individual conferences and written reports provide a important context for supervision (Kaudshin & Harkness , 2002).

At the undergraduate as well as postgraduate level in social work education, supervision is a process whereby a supervisor and a student sit face to face to discuss life and challenges of client and the field (Lager, 2011).

Kaudshin and Harkness (2002, p.2), in the context of a social service agency, describe supervision in the following manner: "*the supervision meant helping the social worker develop practice skill and knowledge and providing emotional support during difficult situation to the person in the role of social work practitioner*".

Role of the supervisor, hence, includes various components. First and foremost, the role of supervisor is to help students adjust in their field/agency. At the same time, supervisor needs to make an effort in aligning the thoughts and behaviour of a student with the code of conduct of Social work profession while facilitating the use of knowledge in the field. A supervisor also helps student in planning activities that fulfil the objectives of fieldwork and align with the role of Social work professionals. A supervisor also needs to liaison with the field or agency in order to provide a more effective supervision. A supervisor also plays a significant role in helping and motivating students to accept themselves with all their weaknesses or limitations while working to address these very aspects. A supervisor also needs to suggest literature to the supervisee so as to strengthen his theoretical knowledge base which would further be helpful in practice. Another key aspect is to probe and stimulate questions which could provide ground for discussion in the next scheduled interaction (Delhi University, 2015; Jamia Millia Islamia University, 2015; Kaudshin & Harkness, 2002; Lager, 2011). During the supervision session, a supervisor also constantly monitors field work activities of students and evaluates the development of a student (Delhi University, 2015; Jamia Millia Islamia University, 2015; Lager, 2011). Along with all of the above, the supervisor must also ensure that his or her behaviour is consistent with the aspirations of social work profession so as to exemplify himself as a role model.

"Recognition that the supervisor is empathetic and accepting makes the supervisee more receptive to the content (p. 167)" (Kaudshin & Harkness, 2002). Hence, qualities of a supervisor are as important as the activities that she is expected to perform to be a good supervisor. According to Zorga (2007), characteristics and competences of supervisors include the ability to understand the boundaries of supervision; readiness to face uncertainty; skill in observing the client and environment; skill in analyzing and interpretation of the observed and

intervening effectively; ability to provide support and a feeling of secure environment thereby encouraging openness in the relationship of supervisor and supervisee; ability to integrate knowledge and practice; clarity on the issues that student might be working with and developing one's framework for supervising in a given setting; flexibility so as to meet the needs and demands of different supervisees; ability to reach consensus and negotiate in planning activities with the students (p. 2). Besides this, he should also demonstrate respect for the supervisee and belief in his capability.

The role of the supervisor is a challenging one and there are certain issues that need to be addressed.

According to Baird (1996) the problem in field work arises due our mindset because we do not want to face any kind of unpleasant situation or challenge. This way, the mindset of a supervisor becomes the biggest obstacle in the field work. We need to understand that this is a normal process and these challenges and unexpected situations give opportunities to learn and expand our horizon.

Addressing students' concerns: Lack of punctuality and irregular attendance in individual conferences and field work poses considerable obstacles. These are the students who may lack interest, confidence and eventually are directionless. For instance at undergraduate level, there were few students who used to attend field work but they used to be late in reaching the agency on fieldwork days. The outreach worker (O.R.W.S) used to leave the office at a stipulated time whereas the students being late were often left behind at the agency office. Gradually, these students were directionless and felt that they were wasting time during field work. These students were also irregular in participating in the individual conferences. In addition to this, they were also losing interest and their self confidence. When the supervisor went for agency visit, he discovered all these aspects and also noticed that the students had failed to maintain communication with their field supervisor and the outreach workers. These work habits of the students were not only posing obstacle in the functioning of the agency but were also affecting their relationship with the agency. The outreach workers used to wait to accompany students in the field site for sometime but they used to leave for community visit if students were taking much time to reach the agency.

In order to resolve such problems, efforts needs to be made to ensure that the students are punctual in their field and regularly attend individual conferences. There should be a rule to mark their attendance in individual conferences and a student should be asked to mark their attendance. In this way, the student is likely to take his field practicum more seriously and it will help in developing a habit of punctuality and discipline among students. More attendance during individual conference will encourage open communication and dialogue between students and supervisor. If a student is found missing from his field work or individual conferences repeatedly or for a long duration, he should be served a 'memo[10]'. Whenever necessary, memos should be served in the interest of the future of the student himself/herself apart from the fact that the good relations between the university and the agency can also get adversely affected if social work educators are not seen taking concrete steps to address problems in students' behaviour.

This will ensure seriousness among students towards their field work practicum and will also ensure in maintaining a positive relationship between the university and the agency. These measures will help in cultivating good work habits among students which will eventually enhance quality in field work practice and learning.

Ideally, a supervisor should encourage an open environment for dialogue and provide space to students for sharing their fears and concerns. At times self disclosure by the supervisor can be of use to a supervisee in shedding his inhibitions and encourages him to share his fears and difficulties. Self disclosure by the supervisor helps in establishing trust and strengthening bond between the supervisor and supervisee (Davidson, 2011). If a student is tense and unable to adjust in the field for long duration, then there is need to review his field placement or the student can be facilitated to review his/her decision to continue the given discipline.

In most of the discipline, theory and practical classes are conducted throughout the session and only one day is assigned for examination to evaluate the performance of the student and understanding in the given discipline. However, the situation is different in field work practicum where evaluation is a constant process. This many times student fail to understand resulting in casual attitude towards requirement of field work practicum affecting their performance and resulting in lesser grade/marks. This often leads to a sense of dissatisfaction among students towards evaluation due to lack of sufficient knowledge. The induction meeting would do away with any possibility of *dissatisfaction among the students with the evaluation process* as mentioned earlier. It is imperative that the student understands the criteria for field work evaluation and recognize that the evaluation process is constant and ongoing.

Preventing potential risks in fieldwork: The risk factors for students in field work are another problematic area. It might be useful to consider the idea that students should not be allowed to work in such zones where there is a ***distinct risk of violation of one's person and life***. E.g. students were working on HIV/ AIDS prevention project and the agency was running a targeted intervention programme for female sex workers. The agency was providing various services to the female sex worker and community nearby i.e. integrated testing and counselling centre (ICTC), Clinic for Sexually transmitted diseases (STI clinic) and drop-in Centres (DIC) for these marginalised sections of the society in the agency office. They were also engaged in arranging STI clinic for sex workers inside the brothels. Besides working in the agency office and in the nearby community, the students placed in the agency were also getting opportunity to go inside the brothels to observe and understand the services being given to the population and to know more about their lives. Given the fact of human trafficking and sensitivity of work involved with this population, it is advisable not to send an undergraduate student trainee for fieldwork in this area. So, students should be given instructions to certainly work with these women but outside brothels area in a secure place or in the agency office but they should refrain going inside the brothel area. Of course a student, in the future, can decide the course of his career life and can choose these circumstances to work as a Social worker

professional.

Managing relationship with agencies: The expectations of the agency should not be unrealistic and there should be a regular and clear line of communication between the agency and the supervisor. The supervisor should go for field visit at least twice in the given session to observe the interaction of the student in the field. A field supervisor should also keep an eye on the relationship between the student and the agency supervisor to find out if there is any tension between the two. Many times, it has been observed that the ***agency supervisors have unrealistic expectation*** from the student trainee. Sometimes, students are assigned tasks which are beyond the capacity of students or many times the students for the most part of their field work are asked to engage in administrative work and desk job (i.e., data entry, register entry). In these tasks, students get limited opportunity to learn. If possible, university should share their field work manual or written objectives of the field work practicum to agency supervisors. In addition to this, student may also be finding it difficult to work in the structured environment of an agency and may need to be supported to challenge his/her own barriers and enhance capacities of work in diverse teams.

Addressing parental concerns: A ***formal meeting with the parents*** in the orientation programme of the trainees with the supervisor would also dispel all doubts, possibilities of misunderstandings and fears regarding the course requirements and the future career prospects, especially for the first year students of Bachelor of Social Work. This will help in ensuring full and hearty support of guardians to the student as that is of crucial importance to carry out field work.

The above mentioned measures will ensure more harmonious and positive relationship between supervisor and the student trainee, and hence would enhance field work learning. The concerns discussed in this article will also provide direction to the supervisors working at undergraduate level to deal effectively with students and diverse scenarios in their fieldwork.

Conclusion

Field work practicum helps a student in self-development and development of necessary skills that help in addressing problems of the client and the society at large. Engagement in various activities helps in developing personality of the worker, helps him understand various problems, and enhances conflict resolution abilities (Batra, 2016). However, there are several challenges for an undergraduate student with limited exposure to various social groups and social issues. At this level, students are yet adjusting with the change from a well structured and predictable school life to an unpredictable and ambiguous field work situation. Hence a supervisor becomes a critical link between the student and the field. A supervisor can help in adjustment of students in the new environment by providing constant support and encouragement. Whenever a student faces internal conflict, the supervisor can help him introspect and imbibe

values and principle of social work profession in the personal and professional life. A supervisor should always be prepared and open for dialogue while encouraging students to share their fears and concerns. Several other aspects can make fieldwork more meaningful to students. For example, ***induction meetings;*** clarifying evaluation process and expected behaviour at the outset of the field work; self awareness strategies; preventing risks in fieldwork for students; preparing guardians to extend their support to the student; frequent communication with agency supervisor; and addressing irregularity and lack of punctuality among students. All these aspects are significant for students at undergraduate level.

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SOCIAL WORK JOURNAL
(BI-ANNUAL)
ISSN 0976-5484
6 (1) January–June 2015, pp. 114–121

Social Work Practice And Conflict Situation In India : A Preliminary Observation

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India's professional social work started in the year 1936. This profession however, have not been given a serious thought about contextualising the discipline to deal with the conflict situation.The present social work intervention, particularly in conflict situation has not been effective in bringing about conflict resolution as the focus of the discipline has confined mainly to humanitarian service particularly in rendering indirect service to the victim/causalities of the political conflict. In other words, the practice is more about treating the symptoms of conflict rather than identifying the roots of the conflict from which models of conflict resolution can be built up. However, this is not the limitation of the discipline per se but could be the weakness on the part of the institutes imparting the knowledge of social work. The paper highlights the need to incorporate the experiences of research and practice that focused on the conflict areas into the curriculum of social work in India. The experiences and interventions will be highlighted by examining the limited literature available in the public domain. This would help us to initiate and/ or strengthen the limited intervention as we are experiencing the situation as part of the practice and education for the last few decades.

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Social Work Practice in Conflict Situation

There are enough literatures on social work interventions for various social problems but the intervention dealing with political conflict is limited. For instance, European social work has been dealing with the impact of terrorism and state violence and also with the consequences of world wars, regional conflicts and local insurgencies (Campbell, 2007). But there are limited interventions from

social work perspectives. However, the role of social work in conflict-ridden areas is now being recognised as the professional who engaged in conflict zones are faced with numerous challenges, such as fear for loss of life, violence, unstable infrastructure, and working conditions. Besides, they regularly faced with moral and ethical dilemmas because of bomb attacks on civilians or buildings or intimidation from rebel or paramilitary forces become normalized (Moore, 2016).

A study investigating the impact of violent political conflict on social workers and service users in Northern Ireland, Israel and Palestine by Ramon, Campbell, Lindsay, McCrystal and Baidoun (2006) highlighted the burden of working and living in a violent political conflict, not just for service users but also for social workers. Emotional stress, fear, competing national and religious identities, yet some indication of resilience, are key findings from the studies. For example, in the Northern Irish study, the geographical location of the workplace often determined the levels of stress related to the conflict. The most frequent type of problematic incident was traffic disruption caused by ongoing violent incidents (e.g. bomb scares), followed next in frequency by the direct effects of explosions (e.g. physical injuries), sectarian harassment, disruption of statutory services, and crossing geographical boundaries. Similarly, in the Palestinian study, the difficulties in getting to and from work due to checkpoints and closures were reported. This led to disruption in the provision of services. Stress, fear and humiliation were felt by Palestinian workers in their encounters with Israeli soldiers at check- points. Often, this added to the time it took to make journeys and led to frustration when visits had to be postponed. In the Israeli study, problems were caused because those service users affected by the violence tended to have high levels of social and health needs, which required intensive and time-consuming interventions, often causing increased waiting times for other service users who also saw their financial benefits reduced. Similarly, Nadan and Ben-Ari (2014) revealed that, identifying the 'other', coping with the spectre of war, tension between the personal and the political, and attempts to extract the conflict from social work education are the main concerns that influence of life in the shadow of protracted violent conflict on those engaged in education and training in social work.

Similar challenges and complexities were also reported while conducting research in conflict settings. For instance, Moore (2016) observed that research is fraught with political implications for all sides of the conflict. Methodological rigidity has no place in a conflict or post-conflict setting, and as such, is quite different from research outside of conflict zones. The researcher's objectives, funding, and even the researcher come under scrutiny by local actors. The activity of research in conflict settings is not 'neutral', and researchers have to consider the implications of the decisions about which populations to study, whose knowledge is important to gain and how that information is going to be disseminated. Research design in a conflict setting has to take in account the origins and the construction of the conflict as it is experienced by the groups living with violence, and must not assume homogeneity of conflict settings. The ability to have methodological flexibility is a critical skill in working in conflict settings, as is

the ability to adapt methods to new security risks or the need for confidentiality. She suggest that mixed method designs are suited to conflict settings, largely because multiple sources and methods can address changing conditions, and the need to both quantify and identify complex behaviors and experiences. Some of the important methodological considerations that she suggest in conflict settings are (i) Sampling, (ii) Generalizability, (iii) Bias, (iv) Validity and reliability, (v) Access, (vi) Vulnerability, (vii) Confidentiality and (vi) Security concerns.

Social Work Education in North East India

Professionalisation of social work began with indigenous practice in newly industrialized Mumbai (erstwhile Bombay) in 1936 led by Sir Clifford Manshardt, an American Missionary, at the Nagpada Neighbourhood House (settlement house for family welfare). With collaboration of the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, the Sir Dorabji Tata Graduate School was started which offered diploma in social service administration. In 1964, with the recognition of the M.A. degree in Social Work by the University Grants Commission, the School became the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (a Deemed University). It was followed by the introduction of "development of professional social work education" in the University of Lucknow in 1946 and later shifted to Delhi in 1948 and named it as the Delhi School of Social Work in 1949. Today there is such a mushrooming of social work programmes that the numbers belie us – maybe there are at least 300 plus institution which offers the course of Social Work today all over the country, including the departments/schools/colleges offering social work education in the North-East (Nadkarni, 2013)

It was only in the 1990s, that the Social Work education was initiated in North East India particularly at Assam University, Silchar and North East Hill University (NEHU) Mizoram Campus, (presently Mizoram University), Aizawl. The Department of Social Work at Assam University started in the year 1997 with a Five Year Integrated Course in Social Work which consists of BSW and MSW. This department has recently offers Ph.D. programme too. Similarly, the Department of Social Work in Mizoram University was initiated under North East Hill University (NEHU- Mizoram Campus) in the year 1990. But, it was only after the establishment of Mizoram University that the Masters of Arts in Social Work was started in the year 2002. At present, the department is offering MSW, M.Phil and PhD programmes. Recently, Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Regional Campus, Manipur, Tezpur University in Assam, and Rajiv Gandhi University in Arunachal Pradesh has also started the post graduate programme on Social Work. Besides, Indira Gandhi National Open University also offers courses on Social Work through its various centres in the region. It can be noted that only the central universities are offering the Social Work programme so far and none of the state universities in the region have started the programme. But, in the last few years, and realizing the importance of the programme, a significant number of private Institutions, colleges and Universities in almost all parts the north-eastern region have started to introduced Social Work programmes (Sharma, 2012). Yet, a matter of concern is that the curriculum and course

contents of the programme, both at the university level as well as at the college level mainly focuses on the general social work curriculum that has limited context of the region, and this is the gap, rather a limitation on the institutes of this region that offers Social Work as a programme. In fact, the conflict situation like the north-eastern region of India should be a significant part of social work curriculum, if at all, we discuss about intervention as social work practice.

Conflict Situation in North-East India

The state-steered discourse and practice of 'security' and 'law and order' have miserably failed either to contain conflict or bring peace. The failure of the state exposes the limited, regimented and also parochial 'vision' of peace pursued by Indian state. On all fronts, wherever the state has stepped in to pursue either peace or development there were peoples 'discontents and resistance. This is true in case of all coercive laws like Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA), 1958, Land Acquisition Act, 1894, ongoing and proposed mega dams etc. Even the initiatives and efforts on the part of the state to settle 'ethnic disputes' by guaranteeing autonomy has also been marked by tactics of 'divide and rule' (Dutta, 2013). Thus, peace remains elusive in India even after 68 years of independence, as the Government of India (henceforth GoI) has been confronted by various degrees of political violence. The political violence ranges from the assertion of the right to self-determination (external and internal) to demand for creating mechanism for protection of indigenous peoples and minorities. The political violence has affected more than half of the total states that constitute India such as Naxalite zone, Jammu and Kashmir zone, and the Northeast zone. The people of the region have been exposed to violence and collateral damages either in direct or indirect form for the last many decades due to the conflict situation between the Indian State and various armed opposition groups. As a result, a militarised culture has developed among the people, particularly the youth and children. The youth are more vulnerable to the conflict situation and this is evident from the fact that most people who got killed in Manipur during the conflict were mostly youth particularly, male between the age group of 20 to 40 years (Sharma & Pukhrambam, 2011).

Besides, stringent counter insurgency operations were launched by the Indian armed forces including the Indian army by declaring the state as a 'disturb area'. Martial law such as AFSPA, which empower any central armed forces to kill on mere suspicion with impunity, was imposed in the state since the late 80s. The incursion of the military into the civil sphere and violence meted out through counter insurgency operations, despite the motto of use of minimal force (Roychowdhury, 2002), tells a lot about the nature of the Indian State. What has emerged in the militaristic approach is that the agents of the State (including the army, para-military forces and police), rather than approaching the affected people as citizens, treats them as "subjects". Equally true is the action of the armed opposition groups. In the militarised situation, ordinary people are caught in the crossfire, lives remain dear, and human rights continue to be violated. Table 1 shows the number of people killed in Manipur from 2001 to 2016.

Table 1: Insurgency related Fatalities in Manipur : 2001-2016

Years	Civilians	Security Forces	Militants	Total
2001	70	25	161	256
2002	36	53	101	190
2003	27	23	148	198
2004	40	41	127	208
2005	138	50	143	331
2006	107	37	141	285
2007	150	40	218	408
2008	131	13	341	485
2009	77	18	321	416
2010	26	8	104	138
2011	25	10	30	65
2012	25	12	73	110
2013	21	6	28	55
2014	20	10	24	54
2015	17	24	53	94
2016	9	8	6	23
Total*	**2260**	**1014**	**2792**	**6066**

*Source: South Asia Terrorist Portal, *Data till July 24, 2016*

According to the Table, a total of 6066 persons were killed in the stated period of time. What is more unfortunate is that more than 60 percent were militants and civilian casualties constituted nearly 30 percent. A disturbing feature of the armed conflict is the kind of impact it has on the demographic profile of the indigenous population. More than 90 percent of the victims were from the indigenous stock.

This table is used for indicative purpose to state the fact that people are indeed killed without really looking into the authenticity as the compilations is done by Government sponsored think tank. One fear arising out of such a compilation is that more than often, civilians killed in extrajudicial killings or fake encounters are clubbed under the category of militants. Take for instance; altogether 1,528 people including 31 women and 98 children were killed in fake encounters by the security forces in Manipur between 1979 and May 2012. Of these, 419 were killed by the Assam Rifles, while 481 were killed by the combined teams of Manipur Police and Central Security Forces (The Sangai Express, 2012). In addition, the weak governance, security guided governance and lack of research capacity has further undermined the situation. For instance, the Northeast India which is experiencing conflict since the late 50s has no authentic data to justify the conflict and also the victims. The victims are across generations and it's now an intergenerational issue. The intergenerational trauma created by such situation has had a severe impact on the development of the community and the state as a whole.

Exploring Social Work Areas of Intervention in Conflict Situation

The militarised culture that has witnessed in the North East Region has resulted in breaking down of the socio-political-cultural institutions that bind and regulate the people and the communities. The militaristic approach of the government has already complicated the issue and now, they are taking up the developmental activities guided by the military framework. However, the government is neither able to contain the movement nor bring peace to the region (Sharma & Pukhrambam, 2011). Moreover, the present social work practice particularly on conflict situation has not been able to contribute significantly in resolving the conflict resolution peacefully. Although social professional work practice started in 1936 in India, none has seriously given a thought about contextualising the discipline with conflict situation in India.

However, there is a need to incorporate the issues of conflict resolution into the curriculum of social work particularly in the conflict ridden states of North Eastern region as they are engaging the situation as part of their practice and education. But, the response of the professional social workers to these regional and local issues is unsatisfactory as most of the social work graduates have done their training from outside the region as well as the curriculum in their courses have limited space for these issues. This, in fact remains a challenges for the effective response through the social work education. Acknowledging the need of professional social work in addressing the human rights issues, the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) has adopted the human rights issues in its policy statements. It includes (i) right to life, (ii) right to freedom of liberty, (iii) right to equality and non-discrimination, (iv) ensuring justice, (v) expressing solidarity, (vi) enhancing social responsibility (vii) ensuring peace and harmony with self and others (viii) working for protecting the environment. Similarly the International Associations for Schools of Social Work has approved and assigned professionals to work on Social Work and Political violence. Similarly, the Inter-University Consortium for International Social Development (IUCISD) in 2003 emphasizes the need to contextualize social work education and practice in the local context (Narayan, 2008).

The limited literatures examined in the paper clearly illustrate how social work can intervene effectively at different levels. For instance, the European PEACE III sponsored teaching and learning project that was designed to enable social work students to better understand the needs of victims and survivors of the conflict in Northern Ireland. They stated that their approaches such as the use of ground rules, group teams consisting of lecturer and service user dyads, learning exercises and case studies is very effective and at the same time, crucial in developing new pedagogical approaches in this area. They found that the students were generally committed to this form of teaching and engagement with victims and survivors of the conflict (Campbell, Duffy, Traynor, Coulter, l Reilly & Pinkerton, 2013). Similarly, the study of Northern Ireland, Israel and Palestine by Ramon and others and Nadan and Ben-Ari (2014) could be incorporated to our engagement as the region is not only experiencing conflict situation but also an ethnic hotspot of India. For instance, British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)

commentator once described Manipur as "India's Bosnia" (Singh, Sharma & Sanasam, 2011). Likewise, Moore (2016) observing that methodological rigidity has no place in a conflict or post-conflict setting, and as such, is quite different from research outside of conflict zones is very relevant mainly because, the conflict situation disturbs one or the other component of the research procedures.

We are witnessing these similar situations in our context, when they move to the field settings. Moreover, we have the major limitations of not being able to access the paid journals, where most of the publications on social work intervention in conflict situation are published. Besides, there is no government institution in Manipur that provides courses to effectively address or intervene in the situation. The Centre for Human Rights and Duties Education, Manipur University offers a one year PG Diploma and six month courses but their activities are mostly limited to class rooms and to some extent awareness programmes as there is no regular faculty. Similarly, the Department of Social Work at Indira Gandhi National Tribal University also offers a paper on Issues of Peace and Conflict in North East India. But the limited nature of such intervention could not effectively intervene in the protracted conflict scenario of the region.

Since we have a limited intervention from social work perspectives, we can learn and contextualise the experiences to suit and to respond to the local situation. This can be by conducting a comprehensively review of literatures on social work intervention in conflict areas. This can be done through the already established institutions such as Tata Institute of Social Sciences and others similar institutions and University who has expertise in both social work and political conflict. This can help us to innovate the intervention and to strengthen the social work intervention in conflict areas of India in particularly and Asia in general. Moreover, we can learn from the research and practice in conflict areas particularly in Latin America, the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa. What appears to be missing in many analyses of the social work role in situations of conflict, however, is an acceptance of the need to consider this role in the context of wider social political and historical processes, however difficult a proposition that might be. The avoidance of such issues may exacerbate and prolong the conflict which creates the problems which social workers are expected to alleviate and solve (Campbell, 2007)

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SOCIAL WORK JOURNAL
(BI-ANNUAL)
ISSN 0976-5484
6 (1) January–June 2015, pp. 122–129

Social Work Education: An Experience from Barak Valley, Assam

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Social work education is based on practice in the realm of society with its variety of diversification. In continuing and upgrading social work education, there are numbers of institutions coming up both in government and private institutions to tackle different issues prevalent in the context of socio-economic, geographical set up, etc. The nature of Social Work practices will vary according to the problems and kinds of help required by the people as a group or as an individual. Today, to tackle the issues and problems of the North East regions, Barak valley of Assam is successfully running Social Work education in Department of Social Work, Assam University, Silchar in its very limited conditions since its inception, 1997. The present article tries to highlight some of the important milestones of social work education of this region of Barak valley. It also focuses on the challenges encountered by the department in practicing praxis.

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Introduction

The diversity of social work profession represents great challenges for social work education, research and practice in the rapidly internationalizing and globalizing world. Social work education comprises of a theoretical component taught in the classroom and field-based education involving integration of the academic aspect of practice. We believe social work is a process of learning by doing i.e. working with the people. It is the common perception of people in general that social work deals only with seeking and gathering information from the people, sharing their knowledge through which they intend to bring social change and development.

Social work is a practice based profession and an academic discipline that promote social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibilities and respect for diversities are central to social work (IFSW, 2014).

The above stated definition revealed that, Social work addresses multiple and complex situations related to people and their environment. Its objective is to enable all people to develop their full potentials. The social work profession focuses on problem solving and bringing a change. It is an interrelated system of values, theory and practice. Further, the profession beliefs in humanitarian approaches, respect for the equality, work and dignity of all people. Human rights and social justice serve as the motivation and justification for social work action.

In the dynamics of social work education and practice, it is changing over the periods of time. Social work is dealing with individual, family and groups, where the practice may influence through the psychodynamic perspective i.e. Freudian theory and Neo-liberalism. Freudian theories of human behavior social work practice lies on human behavior and their needs (Dhemba, 2012). The dominance of this perspective challenges to the practice of social work. In contrast to the theoretical basis of social work practice, general system theory, ecological system theory all suggests to work with the existing problems of individual and the society. The trained student of social work engaged themselves in various developmental work of government, non-government, corporate sector and in various international organizations. The profession itself developed to empower and to work for the marginalized sections of the society with its knowledge, skills and techniques.

The course of social work education has started its journey in India in the year 1936 with the first School of Social Work namely the Sir Dorabji Tata Graduate School of Social Work popularly known as Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) in Mumbai. In the year 1947 another school of social work known as Delhi School of Social Work was established. In the same year Kashi Vidyapeeth, Varanasi and Baroda similar schools were started. Coming across the milestones of eighty five years of its journey is marked with experimentation, expansion and spread of social work education in whole country. There are about 350 schools in India offering Social Work courses as per the sources gathered from experts of social work from across the country (Botcha, 2012).

Compare to earlier trend, the present social work education is widened in different institutes across the country. Courses offered with synonyms to Master of Social Work, M.A in Social Work which covers Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) and Master of Social Work (MSW). Most of the institution provides BSW and MSW as an integrated base course curriculum on the other hand many of institutions offering either BSW or MSW courses. From last few decades people are also pursuing MPhil as well as PhD degree in different fields of social work practice.

Social Work Education in Northeast (NE)

The North East regions of India have several ethnic, linguistic, cultural, religious and geographical entities. Different groups have diverse origins, histories, political aspirations and different traditional institutions (Samson, 2015). The education system of Northeast India has gone beyond the border of traditional social sciences for many decades. The social work education was supposed to be

started in Northeast (NE) India by North Eastern Hills University (NEHU) in 90s. Later on, Assam University Silchar started first course of Social Work in NE India in the Year 1997 and the journey began with a mission to provide better quality of Social Work Education especially in North-East region of India to prepare committed professional Social Workers that can contribute purposefully and meaningfully in this region. The Department of Social Work, Assam University is offering 5 years Integrated course which covers Bachelor in Social Work (BSW) and Master in Social Work (MSW) i.e. 3 years for Bachelor and 2 years for Masters respectively. Overall, the Integrated five-year course has been designed in a manner that students develop a basic knowledge of social work profession and its methods at Bachelor's level and at the Master's level and they build advanced knowledge of the same. Similarly, the Mizoram University was the second university that started offering social work education in NE region. But during 2005 to 2010 there had been sudden blooming of social work profession offered by government and private institutes in northeast India like; Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi Regional Institute of Medical Health (LGBRIMH) an another institute that offers MPhil in Psychiatric Social Work in the region. Recently TISS Guwahati branch and Tezpur University, DON Bosco University Guwahati, Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, University of Science and Technology, Meghalaya (USTM) has also started Post Graduate courses in Social Work. People can also access the distance education facilities in social work under Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU). At present there are more than 20 institutes in Northeast offering Social Work education by government and private institutes.

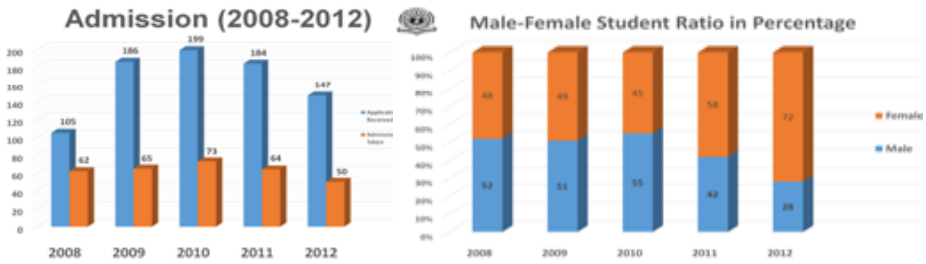
Social Work Education in Barak Valley

As of southern part of the state of Assam, the region of Barak valley is consisted of three districts such as Cachar, Karimganj and Hailakandi districts with total 47, 91,390 populations. Despite of numerous problems ranging from conflict, livelihood, health issues, women and children vulnerabilities in this region, the literacy rate has been impressive in respective districts of the region. According to Census, 2011 report, the literacy rate in Cachar district is 67.82%, the district of Karimganj with 79.72% and Hailakandi district with 59.64% respectively.

The impression of social work education in this region was not much up to the mark during the first decade of its development. As it was the new course to the people of this region, there was not much awareness on the benefits of the course. Social Workers had been generally considered as politicians, community leader, etc. thus, social work as a profession was not received properly in the region. Lack of public recognition of social work education is another critical shortcoming that has a lot to do with its future prospects in India. The notion of the professional social work in the people's mind is in contradiction to an idealized image of conventional social service worker who possess the sterling qualities of heart rather than of mind (Botcha, 2012). But gradually, students started getting jobs in good positions across the country after their completions of BSW and MSW; people then recognized its importance and raised their interests towards

social work education. Hence, in later period, the demand of the course had been increased from the region; thus, Department of Social Work in Assam University, Silchar has increased its intake capacities (Chart no.1 &2)). This helps many students obtained their post-graduation of Master in Social Work. By the time, the Social Work Department of Assam University expanded its field placement by incorporating different communities and social welfare agencies for the purpose of field work practicum. But, the Traditional Social Work approach limits the progress in the region.

Chart No.1 and 2: Intake Capacity in Department of Social Work



Source: Department of Social Work

Field work is an inseparable component of social work education. It is the central mechanism for transmitting theoretical knowledge into the practical level of work. It provides opportunities to students in exposing, learning and developing skills necessary for working with people through their innovative practices in the field, administration, training and research work.

In all semesters of the courses, the students get opportunities to integrate their theoretical learning and develop a holistic understanding of the problems, situations, their causative factors and develop the possible strategies of intervention to their concurrent fieldwork. In the First semester, the students are taken for observational visits to different agencies of both GOs and NGOs to acquaint themselves to the objectives, administrative structure and process of various organizations involved in welfare of aged, women and children and development activities working on different areas of Barak Valley. They, thus get an opportunity to observe and to acquire knowledge about the techniques and strategies used by different government and Non-governmental Organizations. After satisfactory completion of concurrent field work, at the end of MSW final year, students go for block placement for a period of 45 days for a full time work in an approved agency outside Barak Valley. This bock placement gives a platform to students to broaden their perspectives of development and welfare concerns which also enhanced the practiced skills and techniques and integrate the learning independently while dealing with agency setting. Through this block placement, students were enhanced in their social skills and developed leadership qualities, acquired first hands experience and knowledge about the field of social work profession.

Problems and Challenges in Social Work Education in Barak Valley

1. The nucleus of social work education is to impart the integration of social work knowledge, attitudes and skills with relevant to the contemporary social realities and local social realities. The course contents of syllabus of social work education in the department is very generic in nature which neither presenting any paper on the geophysical aspects nor socio-cultural background of Barak valley. Thus the participation from the people towards exercising field work practicum is comparatively less

2. When theory is applied to practice, one of the biggest challenges for social work students is integrating theory with practice in an effective way. Although many social work programmes espouse the importance of integrating theory with practice in their field courses, there are still difficulties in realizing such integrations (Gentle-Genitty, 2014). Similarly such problems and challenges are seen in this region that students face many difficulties in practicing the relevant methods of social work in communities during their concurrent field work. Students are expected to develop and relate the theoretical frameworks of social work through their practices. Applications of theoretical knowledge of these methods are quite difficult for the trainees to apply in the field. Course contents and the existing socio-cultural and geographical scenario of the region further challenge the students' abilities. On the other hand, lack of adequate literatures on social work methods and its practice is also a challenging factor for the students to apply theory knowledge into practice. Due to the existing scenario of Barak valley, they often lack the abilities in identifying and understanding the issues which lead them complicated in applying relevant theories to their work while dealing with their clients, groups and community.
3. There is a high student teacher ratio (16:1) in 2015, in the department which hampers the quality teaching, learning and field practicum. Often teachers are unable to organize Individual conference due to high number of students.

Table No.1: Year wise student teacher ratio.

Year	Ratio
2008	20:1
2009	19:1
2010	20:2
2011	21:2
2012	28:1
2013	28:1
2014	17:1
2015	16:1

4. There are visible shortages of suitable agencies for field work purposes. There are limited numbers of agencies for concurrent field work as opposed to high student-teacher ratio. As the numbers of agencies are less and students are more, it becomes difficult for the agencies to provide sufficient space to the Social Work Trainee for practicing concurrent field work. Thus, only the final year students of both BSW and MSW are able to engage in agency, rest students are placed in different communities. Thus, there are challenges related to practice relevant methods in the field such as case work, group work, community organization and social welfare administration.

5. The relationship between department and field work agency is one of equal partnership where both department and agency supervisor take the responsibility for students learning and acquisition of social work skills. Unfortunately, in Barak Valley, there is shortage of qualified agency supervisors which is another challenge to social work education. It has been observed that most of the agency supervisor, who appointed for the post of Project manager, counsellor and others, do not have adequate knowledge and skills to guide the students in the field. They are not much of expertise on field work practicum of social work profession to guide the students in the field. It's also noticed that location of the agencies from the institution which is much expensive for the students in managing their field work activities.

6. Botcha, (2012) in an article mentioned that most of the social work educational institutions are located in urban areas; students practice fieldwork in urban places and prefer jobs in cities and metropolis. However, social work professionals are most needed in rural areas where about 70 percent of the population lives. Students who have passed out from the department do not want to retain for longer period in the region. Majority of the students have preferred their jobs outside Barak Valley for better exposure and better salary packages. Thus the qualified Social Workers who are the alumni of the department are not much seen in the available agencies of the region.

7. Lack of employment opportunities is another challenge for the region basically in the field of social work in government as well as non-governmental sector. Students those who have obtained MSW degree usually go outside to get better job opportunities because the region of Barak valley does not have many agencies to provide job opportunities to them.

8. Low salary and job stagnation, high turn-over, easy burnouts are some of the crucial issues that would be resolved if we are able to bring standardization in the social work teaching, and practice and at the same time portray a desirable and advantageous image of social work

profession in the country (Devi, 2009). Reflecting upon Barak valley, those students who have passed out with BSW and MSW degree are getting maximum jobs in non-governmental sectors with less amount of salary. Hence it is hard to develop standard of social work education by retaining the qualified students in agencies in Barak Valley.

9. Regarding the placement, there is Placement Cell both at Department and University level. But many good companies and other Recruiting Agencies are reluctant to come for Campus Recruitment due to connectivity issues. Thus students themselves need to look for better job opportunities.

Nonetheless, the scope of social work education has put some remarkable changes in India's NE regions. A large numbers of post-graduate students in social work are engaged in different government and private sectors like National Health Mission (NHM), National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), National AIDS Control Organization (NACO), Child line India, Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS), National Urban Livelihood Mission (NULM), and also working in various NGOs in different projects and other related fields. The observation shows that mindset of the people of this region has changed over the period of time towards social work education and as a result people are now interested in obtaining degree in Social Work. Presently, the social work education has also started offering PhD courses in its diverse fields.

Conclusion

Hence, despite of many limitations, the social work education is quite impressive in Barak Valley. The Department of Social Work of Assam University has a tremendous contribution in bringing up social work education in progress especially for the people of Barak valley. There are numerous issues and challenges in the context of NE India. Despite of all these challenges social work education has gained much recognition and importance from the people of this region as well as from different government and private institutions. However, it carries a picture of areas where professional social workers and academicians both need to be cautious and continuously think on the relevance of traditional social work practices in areas where the problems is more on region specific welfare activities. There is also needed to develop more effective course curriculum in response to the needs, issues, and problems of socio-cultural aspects of the region and also covering as per the scope of social work, recent programme oriented, introduction to the new fields so that it can raise interest among the people towards social work education. There should be proper orientation to the students which will help them in relating theory and practice while working in the field. There is an urgent call for collaborative efforts among the professional organizations of Social Work practitioners/ Educators in North East Regions and also involvement of the government agencies for improving the standard of Social Work education in NE regions.

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Social Work Journal (Bi-annual)

ISSN No. 0976-5484 (Print)

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