

**THE ARTICLES ON  
SOCIAL WORK IN THE  
INDIAN JOURNAL OF SOCIAL WORK**

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I

Literature is an important device to record ideas, propositions and principles derived from individual experiences and observations, which, in course of time, help to add to, and to formulate, a common frame of reference, or an intellectual tradition of a profession. It is also a device of communicating to the professionals, the various observations, experiences and experiments in a manner which contributes to the existing body of knowledge or to the existing frame of reference and to the general growth of the science. A professional journal thus contributes to the formulation and development of this aspect of a profession. As is the case with any new, developing profession, the new trends and variations in thinking and practice of social work are reflected in the articles in professional journals to start with. Through a journal, the experiences in the field of work and the development of new theories in social science could be discussed. Thus, "for the development of the profession, a suitable professional magazine is of vital importance."<sup>1</sup>

For the past several years since the first social work school was established in India

in 1936, there has been a continuing dependency on the social work literature as it is developed in the U.S.A. It is this literature that has provided the frame of reference to social workers in India. And it is necessary at this stage of the development of social work profession in India, that it should develop literature with significant orientation and relation to the Indian social and cultural conditions. It was realised quite early that Indian social work must be based on and related to social work experience in this country. Emphasising this and a need for research in this regard, Dr. Clifford Manshardt clearly stated, "As a matter of fact, the pioneering of a social studies curriculum in India is itself a major piece of research, as it is quite impossible to reproduce western experience without submitting it to a great amount of critical analysis and scrutinising each subject in the light of the Indian conditions. The fact that the Tata School, while still in its infancy, saw fit to establish, the Indian journal of social work for the encouragement of original research is concrete evidence of its interest in this subject."<sup>2</sup>

Thus the *Indian Journal of Social Work* was started by the Sir Dorabji Tata

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Graduate School of Social Work in 1940, only four years after this pioneer social work school was established. The Journal was started as a 'Quarterly devoted to the interests of social work'.

The Journal has since been publishing literature on a variety of subjects related to Indian social conditions, discussing various problems of significance to social workers. The range of the subjects discussed in the articles of the Journal is very wide, carrying from such subject-matter as of general interest to social workers, such as social change, educational problems, communal discord, etc. to such subject-matter as directly relates to the fields and methods of social work, like social work in medical setting, industry, a family welfare agency, etc. The main purpose of this study has been to sort out such material as has direct significance to the fields and methods of social work, or to various welfare services, from a mass of such matter which is of indirect, though undoubted, value to social work. The classification of articles attempted here is not based on any standard pattern of classification, but has a very broad and general basis in order to accommodate the differences and unevenness of approach of various authors and the variety of topics discussed in the articles. It however takes into consideration generally such questions: does the article bring out the function of social work in relation to the subject discussed? does it indicate the welfare services that are existing or that are needed in relation to the groups or problem under study? does it discuss contemporary social work, its history, fields and philosophy? does it examine any of the methods or techniques of social work? does it contain information on matters which contribute to the understanding of social problems and fields of services? etc.

## II

The *Indian Journal of Social Work* has published, over a period of last twenty five years nearly (June 1940 to Sept. 1964), about 838 articles on various subjects related to social work. These include the papers presented for discussion at the annual and biennial sessions of the Indian Conference of Social Work, and other Seminars and Conferences organised under the auspices of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, and other social work organisations. These articles are classified in the following broad categories:

1. general interest topics, including articles on social services like education, health, housing, community harmony, standard of living, social legislation, and social welfare in other countries etc.;
2. allied social sciences, including articles on sociology, economic problems, psychology, psychiatry, anthropology, attitudes studies etc.;
3. labour welfare, including industrial relations, labour conditions, labour legislation, trade unions, social work in industry etc.;
4. social defence, including crime and delinquency, prohibition, beggary, prostitution etc.;
5. correctional social work, including probation, institutional and after-care services etc.;
6. contemporary social work, including general articles on the profession of social work, fields of social work, voluntary social work, history and philosophy of social work etc.;
7. planning administration, co-ordination and evaluation of social welfare, including welfare policy;

8. community development, including rural and urban community development and community organisation;
9. the handicapped, including the physically and the mentally handicapped;
10. medical and psychiatric social work;
11. family and child welfare, including youth welfare;
12. social work education and training;
13. tribal welfare;
14. social case work and group work;
15. the under-privileged, including the scheduled castes, Harijans and backward classes;
16. research;
17. welfare organisations including communal charities, charitable trusts, welfare institutions etc.;
18. public welfare, including social insurance and security.

These are not by any means exclusive categories. The main factor for classifying any article in one particular category is its emphasis on the relevant aspects of the topic. Thus the article on T.B. control is classified under general interest, while that on T.B. social workers, their functions and training has been put under medical and psychiatric social work.

The highest number of articles, 168 out of the total 838, come under the category of general interest topics. The next category to claim a large number of articles is that of allied social sciences, claiming 158 articles. Labour welfare has 128 articles; social defence 49; planning administration, co-ordination 44; community development 43; social work 41; correctional social work 32; the handicapped 30; medical and psychiatric social work 29; family and child welfare 26; social work education and training 26; tribal welfare 21; social case work and group work 17; the under-privileged 8; research 7; welfare organisations 7; and public welfare 4.

A little more careful study of the articles included in these categories indicate their nature thus.

*General Interest Topics.*—The articles included in this category are very informative. They are helpful to social workers to understand, in a better manner, some of the problems they have to face while giving social work help to people, either on an individual level, or in their work with groups and communities. Discussions about educational problems and schemes, unemployment, co-operation, nutrition, dietary standards, health services, physical education, rural indebtedness etc. are some of the topics in view. They help social workers to know what are the general problems and how they affect individuals, groups and communities.

There are other articles in this category that deal with social conditions, welfare problems and services in other countries. There are others that discuss topics of current interest, like war, refugees, etc. They make social workers better informed.

Almost all the articles deal with their subject in a very comprehensive, though general, manner. They trace the historical evolution of the problem. They show the magnitude of the problem, the importance of giving adequate attention to it, or how it has been grossly neglected etc. The function and role of social workers in relation to these, though much limited, has rarely been brought out.

*Allied Social Sciences.*—This is a very important area of the literature published in the Journal. The articles on social science subjects have a definite scholarly quality. The importance of such topics like caste and family, rural-urban relationships, behaviour patterns in social adjustments, family disorganisation, tribal communities, parent child relationships, tradition and its role, personality types, social attitudes, etc. is beyond doubt. Yet it would be necessary to

see the relation of these and such other topics from allied social sciences in a more integrated manner. The value of social science content in social work should be considered, besides providing fundamental knowledge to social workers, more in terms of the integration of this knowledge with the social work methods and skills, and the insight it provides for a careful analysis of the two-way relationship between social science and social work knowledge. It should provide an insight into the use of social work methods, skills in social situations and into related experience.

The various articles dealing with allied social sciences remain distinct from articles discussing social work or social work methods. They do not show any integrating elements that would make them clearly meaningful to social work. 'Contributions of Sociology to Social Work' by Dr. John E. Owen or 'Social Work in Gross Cultural Perspective' by Dr. Herbert H. Aptekar or 'Social Case Work and Cultural Problems' by Smt. M. M. Desai are some of the very few articles that bring out the relationship between social work and social sciences to some extent. While it would be necessary for social work to draw knowledge to a very large extent from social sciences, it would be also necessary to relate this to social work knowledge in a very clear manner.

*Labour Welfare.*—The articles in this category deal with different aspects of labour welfare, industrial relations, labour legislation, work and life of industrial workers, role and duties of labour welfare officers, personnel management etc. They describe and analyse the working of various welfare schemes and programmes, and highlight their adequacies and inadequacies. Generally, they describe very adequately the field of labour welfare in almost all its aspects. Yet as regards the functions of social work in this field, very few articles try to bring

it out. There are a few articles that deal with the functions and role of labour welfare officers, wherein the importance of human relationships, the need for handling workers' problems with an insight into human dynamics etc. have been emphasized. But they do not indicate to what extent, the understanding of the dynamics of human relationships and behaviour is being used by the welfare officers. Labour welfare has been the oldest field in which social work was accepted with some readiness, and it is in this field that a very large number of social workers find employment every year. In view of this, one would expect to find a more established relationship between this field and social work theory, principles and practice, reflected in the articles on labour welfare. Labour welfare literature in the *Indian Journal of Social Work* describes the field most adequately, but only vaguely indicates such a relationship. Case studies which would put in focus the applicability of social work methods and principles in this field are but rare. This is an area which needs attention in the Journal.

*Social Defence.*—The major areas covered by this category are beggary, prostitution, prohibition, crime and delinquency.

There is relatively a large number of articles dealing with the beggar problem. The problem is analysed and assessed in all its aspects. Socio-economic causes of beggary, types of beggars, their mental traits, their organisation etc. have been carefully studied and presented. Some of the articles also give historical review of beggar relief-schemes, legislation for the control of beggary etc. They also suggest schemes for the rehabilitation of beggars, and for prevention of beggary.

Various aspects of crime and delinquency, socio-economic factors leading to such anti-social behaviour, hereditary traits and personality types as studied from habitual

criminals, etc. are described and analysed. Prevention is emphasised in most of the articles, and preventive programmes are suggested.

Comparatively, there are fewer articles on prostitution and prohibition.

*Correctional Social Work.*—It is in the articles in this category that services for correction, control and prevention of the problems of social defence are indicated. They describe such services as they currently exist, as well as suggest new schemes and services as are needed to make the correctional programme more effective. Administration of prisons, certified schools, beggar homes, rescue homes, after-care programmes, etc. have been dealt with in different studies. Probation, its importance and effective use in correctional work, role of probation officers, modern approach to the problems of crime etc. have been discussed and emphasized in a number of articles. The need for social work training for correctional personnel is stressed very often.

*Planning, Administration, Co-ordination and Evaluation.*—Most of the articles on planning social welfare programmes have critically examined the First Five-Year Plan. Subsequent plans have not evoked as much interest and attention in the Journal. Articles on administration and co-ordination of welfare programmes, mainly deal with the need for a different approach to administration of welfare programmes, the need for adequate training of welfare personnel, for co-ordination at various levels in the government departments administering welfare services, among the voluntary welfare agencies, etc. The emphasis in most of these articles seems to be to point out how inadequately social welfare services are attended to, and how much needs to be done.

*Community Development.* — Community Development has attracted much attention

in the Indian Journal of Social Work, since the development programmes were started in the country. Some attempt seems to have been made, though rather vague, to determine the relationship of social work and community development. It is believed that community development is not a field of social work entirely. It covers several areas of work, involving inter-professional team work. Although it is as yet not fully accepted as a field for social work, it seems, that that social work has a role to play in community development, is being gradually realised. "The role of the social worker in this field is that of an educator—However this role of an educator or the very concept of social education is a little distant from the current methodological practice of social work. The question that follows is what is the role of social education in social work: whether or not it is preferable as a new method to the other methods of social work."<sup>3</sup> Yet another author points out: "The task of the S.E.O., as envisaged by the authorities is to create people's enthusiasm and to secure popular participation in the rural development programmes—For looking very much like the community organiser in a social work setting, he represents the mainspring of the implementation of the welfare service plan in the project area."<sup>4</sup>

Articles on urban community development point out that there is little of corporate life and civic co-operation among communities living in isolation in urban areas, and that urban community development, through a conscious process of social integration and social education can evolve corporate spirit and civic cohesion.

*Social Work.*—This category generally covers the modern concept of social work, the scientific approach to social work, the nature and scope of modern social work, the profession of social work and its development in India, its philosophy, its historical back-

ground in India etc. Thus one finds that "Professional social work actually began in India in the forties of the twentieth century, as an organised activity for combating problems of social maladjustments in urban communities."<sup>5</sup> It is also described as a "somewhat immature adoption of foreign methods to deal with problems born out of different causes and conditions."<sup>6</sup> Yet another author sees an increasing professional awareness on the part of social workers in India, and points out to "the need to undertake an objective study of the prevailing social and economic conditions in India, and determine how best we can adapt the various processes of social work, like social case work, social group work, community organisation and social research to the prevailing needs of the Indian population."<sup>7</sup> Doubts are also expressed at places whether social work could be considered a profession at all.

The historical background of social work in India has been brought out rather inadequately. One finds references to the concept of social work in ancient times, but one does not get a clear picture of how modern professional social work found its place, what were the factors that led to professional social work etc.

The philosophy of social work has been discussed in the light of the ideals and principles of social work as upheld by Mahatma Gandhi and also in relation to the basic values of democracy and the acceptance of a scientific approach and discipline to social work upheld by the social work profession. But social work philosophy altogether has not received enough attention in the Indian Journal.

*The Handicapped.*—The articles in this category deal with the problems of both the mentally handicapped and the physically handicapped. They critically analyse the causes and effects of frustration in the

mentally handicapped children, their problems of adjustment to the demands of society, ignorance and inability of parents to recognise mental retardation in children etc. They also suggest ways and means to educate the mentally handicapped and also their parents and family for mutual adjustment, and programmes for making this group as useful and adjusted as possible.

Among the physically handicapped the problems of the blind have been discussed at some length. The problems of the physically handicapped are assessed, and schemes for their education, training and rehabilitation are discussed. The deaf and mute is a neglected group in the Journal, as it is also in the general organisation of services for the physically handicapped.

*Medical and Psychiatric Social Work.*—This is the only field where professional social work seems to have made a mark, and this is reflected in the literature on medical and psychiatric social work in the Journal. Even here, it is more medical social work than psychiatric social work, that is discussed. The role of social workers in a hospital setting, organisation of social service department, the dynamics of the worker-patient relationship, and the way the worker makes use of his social work training are clearly brought out. Emotional support, medicines, contacts with the family, accommodation in infirmaries, referral for prosthetic appliances, organising library services, tuition for hospitalised children etc. are some of the types of services and help the social worker gives to patients. Emphasis is laid on the role of a psychiatric social worker in the diagnosis of patients, and on other help a worker is able to give. A number of these articles present case studies in Indian settings and are helpful in seeing clearly the application of social work theory in Indian setting, as well as its limitations.

*Family and Child Welfare.*—When viewed as one of the fields of social work, this category does not do much justice to the subject, in the sense that the articles do not indicate the existing welfare services for the family and the child. They do discuss however, several services that need to be organised, the need for such services in view of the changing social patterns, etc. It is perhaps indicative of the fact that services are yet to be developed in this area. A family welfare agency, its functions in a community are still rarely known. However, the different areas in which a family could need help from a family welfare agency have been clearly brought out.

*Social Work Education and Training.*—The main emphasis of the articles in this category seems to advocate the importance of formal education and training for social workers. Proper selection of students, importance of a well-organised field work programme, examination of the syllabus, suggestions for changes in the courses, standardisation of training etc. are discussed to a great extent. The articles plead for a recognition of the need for trained social work personnel, and standardised post-graduate training, and state at more than one place, that there are no substitutes for full professional trainings

In recent years, however, the attention of the social work educators seems to be directed to the more practical problems of social work education, viz. field work and supervision. The articles, however, only emphasise the importance of these in social work training. And one does not get much idea as to the efforts made in different schools of social work to make the field work programme more effective, and supervision more meaningful and educative to the students. It is claimed that, "The training movement for professional social workers in India is now emerging from an experimental

state to a stable status."<sup>8</sup> It seems to be reflected in the change of emphasis. The emphasis on the need for training has more or less disappeared. And there is increasing emphasis on the content and pattern of social work training.

*Tribal Welfare.*—These articles deal with the subject in a very general manner. Yet the social and cultural patterns of the tribes, their special problems because of their isolation for ages, the need for trained personnel is emphasised again and again. The problems of tribal welfare, being in the main the problems of tribal development, are much akin to those of community development. And social work still has to establish its role in both these areas.

*Social Case Work and Group Work.*—Among the methods of social work, it is only social case work that has found some place. There are hardly any articles on group work and community organisation though there are a number of references to the use of these methods in different situations. There is a general feeling that in India mass methods are likely to be more effective than the individualised methods like case work. And it is curious that it is case work which has been discussed to a greater extent in the social work literature in the Journal. There are only 16 articles on case work, hardly works out an average of one per volume of the Journal. The authors have attempted to relate the use of case work in the Indian social cultural setting, and in relation to different fields, medical, correction, probation etc.

There seems to be a trend that, perhaps in the authoritarian cultural pattern, a more active approach would be more advisable in the practice of social case work than too much emphasis on the principle of self-determination, self-responsibility etc. This principle, though intellectually acceptable at

present, in actual practice seems to be rousing resistance and a feeling of inadequacy in the clients in certain situations.<sup>9</sup> But it is still difficult to make any generalised statement in this regard, as there is no additional evidence in the rest of the literature, to support it.

*The Under-privileged.*—The problems of the scheduled castes, the untouchables, the Harijans and other backward communities are analysed and discussed in this category. Education, technical training, employment opportunities, special facilities that would enable this class to rise upto a minimum level in the country and compete with other classes are discussed adequately at quite some length. They also discuss the adequacies and inadequacies of the existing programmes for their welfare.

*Research.*—The seven articles in this category point out the importance of social research and the functions of research in social work. This is yet a very neglected area in India, and research literature, in the Journal clearly reflects it.

The research notes, that are lately being published in the Indian Journal, are very valuable. They give information on the findings of different researches on common problems, bringing together the considered opinions of research scholars on these problems, providing a sort of a valid base of knowledge at this stage as far as these problems are concerned.

*Welfare Organisations.*—The articles in this category give information about different welfare agencies, charitable trusts, social work training institutions etc.

*Public Welfare.*—Social insurance and social security are discussed in this category. These were perhaps inspired by the Employees' State Insurance Schemes, and weigh the possibilities of having a general social security scheme to cover different sections of the population.

### III

(The articles in the Indian Journal of Social Work thus deal with a very wide variety of subjects which are of much interest to social work. Social sciences occupy a very prominent place in the Journal. Comparatively, the number of articles dealing with various aspects of modern professional social work is very small. Generally, the articles contain much information on the subject they discuss. They give a brief background of the subject, giving it a historical perspective. They usually take into account almost all aspects of the subject, and there seems to be an effort to give as much information, on as many aspects of the subject as possible. Most of the articles stand out in terms of their comprehensive scope and a well informed approach. There also seems to be an emphasis on the descriptions of current problems and their plausible solutions.

One of the important needs that the Indian Journal of Social Work has tried to meet, is that for statistical information. Usually it is very difficult to get statistics, particularly for social welfare activities in the country. The articles in the Indian Journal contain statistical information, though not always up-to-date. The Journal has been one of the very few sources of welfare statistics for a long time.

Another important area that the Indian Journal of Social Work has covered, although to a very limited extent, is in relation to social work literature related to Indian background. Here again, it is the Journal which has some material dealing with social work practice in India.

There have however been several gaps in the Indian Journal, which perhaps result from the small number of articles dealing with modern professional social work. The

limited number of such articles does not offer much scope for presenting related, consistent and integrated material which takes into account what has been said on the subject by others. As a result each article shows a tendency to be an independent unit of thought based mainly on the author's own experience and observation. It does not indicate a development of thought built on earlier writings. Thus social work literature in the Indian Journal tends to be, what Roger Little calls 'collective literature', which has its value up to a point. The tendency to be non-cumulative seems to result from "a common failure of the social work profession to communicate its experience and thinking by cumulative analysis and synthesis rather than by accretion."<sup>10</sup> The characteristics of being unrelated, descriptive, general etc. are not peculiar to social work literature in the Indian Journal. They are to be commonly found with the social work literature in India and outside as well. This is perhaps because of the peculiar nature of the social work knowledge developed by the social work profession. Alfred Kadushin, while studying this component of social work knowledge in U.S.A., points out that it is all based on experience and casual observation. And experience can never be adequately communicated. But at the same time there needs to be an effort to conceptualise such knowledge, through the communication of ideas or what is known as an intellectual frame of reference. Such an effort needs to be vigorously made in the Indian Journal of Social Work, the leading social work journal in the country.

The articles on social work in the Journal at present deal more with the broader problems related to social work. This has had its value in clarifying the basic values that social work upholds. But now there seems to be a need for such articles as would

deal with particular, more clearly identified issues that are directly involved in social work practice in India, and with such issues that are particularly relevant to social work problems in India. This would be possible when the articles on social work in the Journal would show a pronounced and clearer professional orientation. It would be necessary to have a larger number of such articles so that it would be possible to systematise individual observations and experiences and to relate them to the efforts of other thinkers.

There seems to be a conscious effort now in this regard, as seen from the research notes, lately being published in the Journal. These notes present the findings of various researches on common problems for the guidance of future research providing a valuable and valid base of knowledge as far as these problems are concerned. Such efforts need to be extended to other areas of social work knowledge as well, particularly keeping in view the contributions of professional social work and its practice in relation to different problems.

The Indian Journal of Social Work has made a very important contribution in indicating a different approach to social problems. The concept of social work put forth in the Journal has no longer limited itself to that of helping people in need. An important addition to its dimensions is that of "... helping them in making their own adjustments to life, building their inner strengths and resources so that it ultimately develops their capacity to lead satisfying and useful lives, independent of outside aid; with these new perspectives social work has very little need for pure charity and philanthropy. ... because that only leads to further dependency and deterioration of ones' capacity to help oneself."<sup>11</sup>

Yet another dimension of the professional approach represented in the Indian Journal

of Social Work has been the acceptance of a scientific discipline in social work. The values of scientific approach had been appreciated by the Servants of India Society from the very beginning, as seen from its emphasis and insistence on a study of facts as a basis for action. Scientific discipline in relation to the problems of social work showed a different significance, in terms of specific techniques based on a Scientific understanding of social and personal dynamics. ". . . . The acceptance of a scientific discipline in social work has two important implications which need to be understood. Through its knowledge of social dynamics and the dynamics of the human personality, science has contributed to our understanding of the causes of individual and social problems. The understanding of the causes has led to a hope and faith that these causes can be removed. At the same time, an understanding of what at least seem to be the real causes of our problems has led to an

undermining of the traditional approach to their solution—an approach which may alleviate, but not cure. Also Science has brought out the highly complex and delicate nature of human problems which need human sympathy and devotion, but need in addition, specific skills."<sup>12</sup>

Social Work is thus shown to imply the practice of these specific skills, viz. social case work, social group work, community organisation and research,'in the areas of social welfare, and that, any one who practises them is a social worker. Such a professional stand-point also stressed the value of these skills, and the importance of training social workers in these through formal education for social work. The Indian Journal of Social Work has thus strived all these years to be "a quarterly devoted to the promotion of professional social work, scientific interpretation of social problems and advancement of social research."

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