Asian Challenges to Globalisation of Social Work Education

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This article tries to describe the impact of globalisation on social work education in Asian countries. A historical review of the import of social work education from the United States of America to Asian countries like India, Japan and China is discussed. The dynamics and challenges in forms of homogeneity versus diversity, universality versus specificity, and independence versus interdependence are mentioned. Their impacts to the future development of social work education in Asian countries are also described and appropriate responses suggested.

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INTRODUCTION

The development of social work education around the world was closely related to the development of international development of social work. Mayadas and Elliott (1997) described that there were four phases of international social work development.

- Phase one marked the phase of the Early Pioneers (1880s-1940s). Charity Organisation Societies (COS) and Settlement Movements were imported from England to the United States of America (USA). Social work education gradually developed in the USA and the United Kingdom (UK) in this phase.
- Phase two was the phase of professional imperialism in which American social work began to export to Europe (Mayadas and Elliot, 1997). At the same time, social work education was also exported by missionaries from the UK and the USA to other parts of world, including Asia, Africa and South America.
- Phase three (1970s-1990s) saw the re-conceptualisation of social work as inspired by social development, oppression and radical political ideas in response to underdevelopment and exploitation in various countries (Mayadas and Elliott, 1997). In this phase, social work education in non-Western countries, like India and Japan, tried to struggle for its own uniqueness according to their own political and social contexts.
- Phase four has seen frequent exchange of social work practice among different nations and ethnic groups (Mayadas and Eilliot, 1997).

Facilitated by technical assistance from developed countries social work practice and social work education in underdeveloped and developing countries gradually became an internationally recognised professional way to deal with social problems in many countries (Kendell, 1995). Right now, it is estimated that more that 70 countries around the world have social workers or training institutes for social work education (Watts, 1995). Today, both social work practice and social work education in many countries are deeply challenged by the globalisation of economy and technological advances. Social work education and practice is no longer simple with its unique ethnic and cultural contexts. Instead, it has to face the drastic changes in the needs of clients, social problems, human rights, and the quality of life speeded up by the globalisation (Drucker, 1993; Midgley, 2000; Rowe, Hanley, Moreno and Mould, 2000; Watts, 1995). The changes of social work and social work education in any country or city are mutually influenced by those in other countries and cities (Drover, 2000; Midgley, 2000; Rowe and others, 2000). In this article, I have tried to describe the dynamics and challenges faced by Asian countries, in particular, India, Japan and China in the globalisation of social work education.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION IN ASIAN COUNTRIES: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

Though there are many Asian countries, I have only outlined social work education in some important Asian countries like India, Japan and China, as the development of social work education in these countries were closely related to the development of international social work, influenced by the happenings in the USA and the UK. Their development can be roughly divided into three stages.

Stage 1: Social Work Education Import from the USA through the Evangelical Movement

During this stage, American social work was also exported to Asian countries like India, Japan and China, together with the evangelical movement, by Western missionaries.

Social   Work   Education   in   India

The first stage in India was an indigenous inception of social work education before its Independence from British rule (1936 to 1947). Clifford Manshardt, an American missionary, founded the Sir Dorabji Tata Graduate School of Social Work (now the Tata Institute of Social Sciences) in Bombay (now Mumbai) in 1936 with financial support from the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust. This was the beginning of professional social work education in India. Thus, professional social work in India was initiated through a combination of religious impulse of charity and

the modern scientific orientation of Sir Dorabji Tata, a pioneer in the field of industry in India (Ranade, 1987).

Social Work Education in Japan

The first programme of social work education in Japan may be traced to 1908 when the national government began to train workers in correction and relief. In this course, subjects like mental health, child psychology, administration and treatment programmes were taught. In 1911, Taisho University, a Buddhist university in Tokyo, set up a study centre for social work. In 1918, this university started the first social work course in Japan. By 1932, Japan had 11 Buddhist and Christian colleges and universities offering social work courses (Maeda, 1995).

Social Work Education in China

Social work education was first introduced to China in the 1920s by American professors in the sociology departments of Yanjing University (now Beijing University), Jinling University, Lingan University, Fudan University, Qili University, Tsinghua University and Furen University (Lei and Shui, 1991).

Stage 2: Americanisation versus Struggle for One's Uniqueness

In this stage, social work education in Asian countries were either heavily Americanised or tried to struggle for their own uniqueness, according to their own political and social contexts. For countries like India, that were open to Americans, they were heavily influenced by American social work development. For those countries that were heavily shaped by their own unique political changes, like the rise of nationalism and totalitarianism in Japan and communism in China, they tended to isolate the American influence.

Social Work Education in India

The second stage (1948 to 1980s) was the period after Independence in India in which social work education took shape under American influence. After Independence, social work education flourished. In 1950, another school of social work was established in the University of Baroda. Several others came into being, including one in Madras (now Chennai) and Lucknow in 1954 and another in Mumbai in 1975. By 1975, when the Second Review Committee for Social Work Education appointed by the University Grants Commission undertook a survey, there were 34 institutions of social work in the country. Within this period, social work education in India was highly Americanised. First, under the influence of US Government's Technical Cooperation Mission and Council of Social Work Exchange Programme, faculty members of Indian schools of social work studied in the USA. American books and journals were extensively used in Indian schools of social

work (Nagpaul, 1986). Furthermore, under the American influence, in this period, there was an introduction of specialisations in social work. However, social work education and practice were confined to curative and remedial measures (Mandal, 1995).

Social Work Education in Japan

In 1933, Japan withdrew from the League of Nations and started on the path towards nationalism and totalitarianism. From 1933 to 1945, the end of World War II, social work and social work education in Japan was temporarily suspended. The first school of social work in Japan was started in 1946, which later developed into the Japan College of Social Work in Tokyo. In 1950, Doshisha University in Kyoto set up the first Master's Degree programme in social work. In 1955, the Japanese Association of Schools of Social Work (JASSW) was organised with nine schools of social work. Under the umbrella of the JASSW, social work and social work education regained momentum to develop in the coming decades.

Social Work Education in China

After the establishment of the People's Republic of China, social work education ceased under intensive political movements (Yuan, 1988). Social work practice and education were regarded as weapons used by capitalist Americans to pollute the minds of followers of communism. Political ideologies in terms of Marxism and Maoism were regarded as the source of power to resolve all kinds of social and individual problems. This stage lasted from 1949-1976.

Stage 3: Searching for an Indigenised Model

In this stage, Asian countries tried to escape from the influence of Western countries, especially from Americans. They tried to formulate their own models according to the challenges within their own cultural, political and social contexts — for example, a drastic increase in population especially the aged population, the problems of poverty, and social as well as economic development

Social Work Education in India

The third stage was a period (1980s to present) in which social work education in India responded to the inadequacies of the curative model and developed into a promotional and reformative model (Mandal, 1995). After the 1980s, scholars in India began to beware of the overwhelming influence of American social work. Kulkarni (1993) argued that professional social work in India should have a distinct model of its own, in spite of adopting and adapting from other countries. Mandal (1995) proposed that Indian social work education should put more weight on the unique social condition in India. The social development orientation should be stressed to cater to the demands of social

deprivation and social reform in India. The social development orientation can be included in three types of subjects. The first will include those subjects, which help in the understanding of the society and of the individual in the broader context of the global trend and movement. Second, social work educators should teach subjects which concentrate on the change process and on the whats and whys of this change, as well as the how-tos. This will be the course on method. Third, social work should deal with planning, decentralisation, technology, irrigation, family planning and a substantial reorientation of the traditional fields of practice. This will require a reorganisation of theories, which would involve inclusion of topics on cultural history, methods of change, social philosophy, political sociology, environmental sciences and others (Gore, 1981; Mandal, 1995). Finally, a promotional social work model should be advocated so as to promote equality, social justice and human rights in India (Mandal, 1995; Ramachandran, 1989).

Social Work Education in Japan

Drastic economic development in Japan meant several challenges for social work education. First, Japanese people lived the longest in the world. There was an insurmountable need of care the elderly. Second, starting from the 1970s, there was a student movement against Western influence. Activist students demanded revision of their social work curriculum thinking that it was too Western. The liberation movement also shook the traditional Buddhist and Confucianist values and total submission to authority, family and country. Young *mobo* and *moga* (modern boys and girls) were rebellious and frustrated. Also, the highly competitive commercial life made the Japanese highly vulnerable to stress. The competition for seats in the 'good' universities is very fierce and aspiring students have to study hard for many years to enter the universities of their choice. Admission to 'good' universities is treated as the only gateway to a good career. As for social work, 39 universities and colleges are currently members of the JASSW. The total number of students in social work courses or departments in those schools is estimated to be around 13,000. Eleven junior colleges are also members of the JASSW. There are many other colleges that offer training for child care workers, but these are not members of the association (Maeda, 1995). Social work education in Japan has to face the growing challenge of problem in an affluent, but highly competitive, society with increasing aged population and a rebellious, lonely and frustrated young generation (Maeda, 1995).

Social Work Education in China

In the 1980s, the open door economic policy of China encouraged the re-establishment of social work education. In .1989, Peking University launched its social work programme at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. It was gradually followed by other universities and

cadre training colleges in China (Yuan, 1998). In 1998, the number of institutional members of the China Association of Social Work Education increased to 37 (Wang, 1998). Social work education in China faces several challenges. First, China is still a socialist country in which Marxism and socialism are dominant political ideologies. These political ideologies may be in conflict with the ideologies of social work, especially in equality and dignity. Second, China is still deprived of indigenous research and curriculum, textbooks, as well as trained professionals and social work educators. Third, there is a great diversity of needs and social conditions in China. Though urban areas are developing rapidly, the rural areas are deprived. On the one hand, there are fast growing problems in suicide, substance abuse, marital problems and crime. On the other hand, there is an urgent need of social and community development in rural and deprived areas (Yuan, 1998). Finally, cadre schools and the Civil Ministry are the fundamental units in social welfare and social work education. Most of these units are highly politicised and bureaucratised. Social work professionals in China have an uphill struggle in both social welfare services and social work education (Wang, 1998).

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE ASIAN AND WESTERN CULTURES

Apart from the Western influence in social work education, in particular the USA, social work education and social welfare development in Asian countries are influenced by their unique cultural contexts. The traditional cultures of Asian countries are profound and complicated. Confucianism, Buddhism, and Hinduism have influenced the values of many Asian countries (Doi, 1956; Enriquez, 1992; Ho, 1989 and 1995; Ho, Peng and Lai, 2001; Naito and Gielen, 1992; Paranjpe, 1998). Nimmagadda and Cowger (1999) asserted that Hinduism still continues to extend a crucial influence on all Indians. In Hinduism, *dharma* literally means duty or one's obligations and expectations. Any individual's *dharma* encompassed his/her whole life: duties towards family, community, society and occupation. *Karma* is the belief that your actions in one life will affect all your other lives after that one (Collins, 1987: 980) Faith in *karma,* which means one has what one deserves, tended to increase the acceptance of Indians towards poverty and sufferings (Nimmagadda and Cowger, 1999). Similarly, in Chinese Buddhism, one's suffering and fortune in the present life life was pre-determined by one's own deeds in previous life (Ho, 1998; Lin, Tsang and Yeh, 1995; Yip, 1999 and 2001). This form of thought even further developed into the Three Lives Book *(samsinshui).* According to this, one can read his/her previous life, the present life and the next life. Similarly, in Chinese Taoism, one is advised to be free from the temptation of the secular world and be integrated with the dynamic Dao in the Universe. For the Chinese, the law of nature

governs everyone in the forms of fung shui (water and wind), Yin and Yang (Shadow and Sun) and Wui Hang (the five elements of: metal, wood, water, fire and earth) (Lin, Tsang and Yeh, 1995; Yang, 1988 and 1997; Yip, 1999). Instead of advocating for individual rights and achievement as in the Western culture, under the influence of Buddhism, Taoism and Hinduism, Asian people believe that one's own fate is pre-determined by the laws of nature and what one did in his/her previous life (Doi, 1973; Ho, 1998; Lebra, 1976; Nimmagadda and Cowger, 1999).

Furthermore, Asian culture has always stressed on collectivism instead of individualism. In Filipino culture, unlike the English word 'other', *kapwa* is not used in opposition to the self. Instead, *kapwa* is the unity of the self and the other and implies a shared identity of the inner self. Variants of the notions of shared identity may be found in other Asian cultures as well. Concept of selfhood and identity in Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism and Hinduism, in contrast to the West, are not marked by a sharp self-other demarcation or individual identity (Ho, 1995 and 1998). Undermining this is the family orientation of Asian cultures. Yang (1995) stresses that under the influence of Confucianism, the Chinese are accustomed to a family orientation. This orientation has six basic components: family harmony, family solidarity, family prolongation, family prosperity, family honour and pan-familisation. The Chinese subordinate their personal goals, interests and welfare for the sake of their families (Yang, 1995). In Hinduism, *dharma* tells us that all human action must conform to the eternal order that is all prevailing. Maintenance of order and justice is achieved through *dharma.* It can be interpreted as a concept or a duty for individuals as well as for institutions. It also provides elaborate guidelines for a delineation of duties for different castes. Entry into a caste is determined by birth and changing one's caste is not possible (Nimmagadda and Cowger, 1999: 264). Similarly, under the Confucian heritage, a relational orientation also appears in Japanese and Korean cultures. Japanese constructs that have received research attention include *amae,* which means 'to depend and presume upon another's benevolence' (Doi, 1956; Ho, 1998). It also implies a debt or obligation (Ho, 1998). Choi, Kim and Choi (1993) conducted an indigenous analysis of the Korean constructs *woori* (an inclusive group: we or us) and *cheong* (human affection). Their results illustrate a relational mode of the group in which *cheong,* acting like an emotional glue, binds its members together (Ho, 1998; Choi, Kim and Choi, 1993). Although modernisation by Western cultures in Asian countries are wide and drastic, traditional cultures still have a very significant impacts on Indians, Filipinos, Chinese, Japanese and Koreans and other Asians (Choi, Kim and Choi, 1993; Doi, 1956 and 1973; Enriquez, 1992; Ho, 1998; Naito and Gielen, 1992; Nimmagadda and Cowger, 1999; Paranjpe, 1998; Yang, 1995).

DYNAMICS AND CHALLENGES IN THE GLOBALISATION OF SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

The impacts of globalisation of social work education are influenced by the globalisation of technology and economy and the globalisation of the American culture. In fact, globalisation is a multifaceted phenomenon in which technological innovation, particularly in communications, has played a vital role (Midgley, 2000:15). Global economic activity speeds up global integration of cultures, population and knowledge from various parts of the world. It facilitates the influence of social work practice and social work education from the USA and the UK to other countries. It also speeds up exchanges of wisdom, experiences and knowledge of social work practice and social work education around the world. The interaction due to globalisation of social work education, globalisation of technology, and the globalisation of culture is shown in Figure 1. Within these inter-factorial influences, there are many dynamics and challenges to the globalisation of social work education.

FIGURE 1: Challenges in the Globalisation of Social Work Practice and Social Work Education
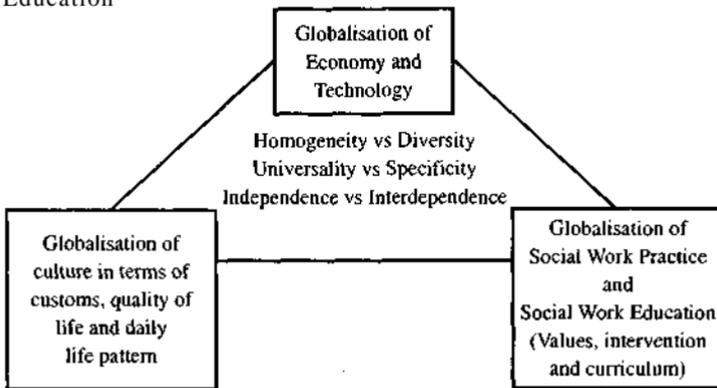
Homogeneity versus Diversity

Within the globalisation movement, social and cultural contexts in every country are no longer homogenous; instead it is influenced by the globalised American culture. Also, globalisation of information technology and economy facilitates cultural exchange among different countries. One can easily access Japanese, Chinese and Indian food in American and even European countries. Also, globalisation of economy, transport and information encourages the mobility of population around the world.

Based on T.H. Marshall's idea of social citizenship, Drover (2000) advocated that there are three essential components of new social citizenship in a global era: active citizenship, extra statism and diversity. An active citizenship concerns not only rights, but also caring. Rights emphasise the learning of rules and abstract principles to guide and to

prioritise human relations. Caring stresses on moral sensibilities and social context in the assessment and satisfaction of human needs. Extra-statist is a citizenship that transcends borders. Individuals are free to leave their country of origin to settle in other countries (Drover, 2000). That means, individual rights and responsibilities or even morality are affected by a trans-cultural delineation across boundaries of countries. Therefore, different cultures, especially Asian cultures may have different interpretations of social work values. While Western countries emphasise individual rights in social work values, other countries like those in Africa and Asia may stress on caring and responsibility. Finally, diversity, including cultural diversity, and gender are an essential part of a new social citizenship. Cultural communities provide the wherewithal within which responsibility, candour and trust, common interests, and action toward the betterment of society are also learned. Under these influences, social work education and social work practice can never be fixated to the homogenous Western interpretation of rights, equality and justice. Instead, it should embrace various interpretations from different cultural contexts. In the same way, social work practice interventions cannot be confined to a Westernised intervention model; rather, it should embrace different practice wisdom from different ethnic groups. Diversity of social work education, in fact, came from multifaceted fields in every country. There is great diversity in the roles of social workers, models of social work practice and social welfare services, qualification and training of social workers around the world (Watts, 1995).

Universality versus Specificity

Under the influence of the globalisation of economy and culture in various countries, the tensions and debates in international social work and cross-cultural social work can be roughly divided into two camps of arguments — the universal orientation and the specific orientation. Within the universal orientation, social work practice and social work education are regarded as universally applicable to different social and cultural contexts. Mayadas and Lasan (1984) asserted that despite diversity of different cultural and social contexts, social work in many countries still focussed on the betterment of human life, especially those with disadvantaged population (Kendell, 1987; Mayadas and Lasan, 1984; Watts, 1995). Social work around the world seems to struggle amongst the control of government, social inequality, gap between theories and practice as well as socio-political change in the society (Cox, 1995 and 2000; Watts, 1995).

Within the specific orientation, social work practice and social work education should vary according to different social and cultural contexts. Kendall (1987: 988) asserted that there was no universal pattern of social work education, and even within countries, a variety of models

may coexist comfortably. Within these two polarities, various degrees of differences can exist. They are:

1. Social work practice and social work education should be universally defined and applied to different countries. Countries around the world should adopt these definitions and models with slight adaptations to their own cultural and social contexts. Vast and great deviation from these definitions and models may imply that practice models in certain countries cannot be labelled as 'social work'.

2. There should be some universal components in social work practice. Apart from these similar components, different countries should evolve their own models according to their cultural and social contexts.

3. There are no universal components in social work practice and social work education. Every country should evolve its own practice and education models.

In bridging the gap between universal natures and local specific natures in social work education and social work practice, Life (2000) suggested that a strong link can readily be made between human rights, which can be regarded as universal, and human needs, which can be relative. No longer can we think globally, act locally. But, rather it has become necessary to think and act at both the local and global levels, and to link the two (Life, 2000).

Independence versus Interdependence

Under the drastic influence of globalisation of economy and globalisation of culture, an individual country can never be independent from the influence of other countries. Instead, the politics, economy and social life of every country is interdependent with those of other countries. The same applies to the globalisation of social work practice and social work education. Rowe and others (2000) conducted an international survey on 45 social workers affiliated with the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW). The sample included social workers from different regions of the world, fields of practice, and gender. The results showed that it was important to recognise that the definition of social work differed greatly across cultural contexts (Payne, 1998; Rowe and others, 2000). The professionalised concept of 'social workers', especially those social workers who provided individual clinical services, originated in Western industrialised countries, but most societies have always had a role for individuals who worked to improve the conditions for their fellow community members. While clinical practice may be more characteristic of industrialised countries, community organisers in Western countries have learnt many of their strategies and skills from their peers in developing countries. The study also showed that three values were held common for the by social workers, regardless of their countries of origin —

respect and appreciation for difference, commitment to social justice and well-being of all in society, and willingness to persist despite frustration. Nearly all respondents agreed that globalisation had facilitated exchange between social workers from different countries. Some social workers used international conventions on social, political and economic rights, to add more weight to their work, as well as to break down activist isolation in demanding change (Rowe and others, 2000).

Vigorous Exchange in Social Work Education

Globalisation of social work education and social work practice facilitates vigorous exchanges in various countries, especially those in Western and Asian countries. First, international church organisations such as the Young Men's Christian Association, the Young Women's Christian Association, the Scout Associations, and the Lutheran Church affiliations, directly import Western social work models into other countries and at the same time, reflect the needs and social conditions in these countries to mother organisations. Second, many social work scholars and senior practitioners in Asian, African and South American countries have graduated from renowned universities in the West. They have then transplanted Western social work into their own countries. They also serve as the link for Western social work academics to explore the situations of social welfare and social work education systems in these countries. Third, situations in various countries are quickly shared through the Internet. Also, social work courses can be taken in the form of distance learning through web-based teaching (Sandell and Hayes, 2002). Fourth, migration, movements occur from less developed countries to better-developed countries. Worldwide population movement is facilitated by speedy transportation, global economic activities, as well as frequent political, social and cultural exchanges among countries. Lastly, international organisations like the IFSW, International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW), and the International Council of Social Work facilitate exchange of social work in various countries through mutual visits, academic conferences, journals and published books (Tan and Envall, 2000).

THE CHALLENGES OF GLOBALISATION OF SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION TO ASIAN COUNTRIES

Asian Homogeneity versus Diversity

All Asian countries face several challenges due to the globalisation of economy and globalisation of social work education. First, they are densely populated as compared to their Western counterparts. More of their populations are facing social deprivation and inequality due to the problems of economic globalisation (Cox, 1995 and 2000; Drucker, 2000; Kulkarni, 1999; Life, 2000). Second, their culture and traditions are profoundly different from those of the Western countries (Cox, 1995; Mandal, 1995; Wang, 1998). It seems that social problems and social

welfare services in Asian countries have their own uniqueness due to their own socio-cultural contexts. Many Asian countries like India and China are still strongly influenced by their profound traditional cultures. Third, despite the drastic economic changes and the impact of globalisation, input of resources in social work education in Asian countries is still comparatively less than in the West. Though there is a growing demand for trained social workers and social work educators, many Asian countries still have to use untrained or para-trained social work professionals in service (Cox, 1995).

Apart from these similarities, however, the Asian countries are very different in terms of race, religion and ethnicity. They are in various stages of economic development ranging from highly affluent countries like Japan to economically poor countries like Indonesia and the Philippines. The more affluent countries may have more resources and potential to develop better social work training and education.

Universality versus Specificity

Due to the globalisation of economy and social work education, all Asian countries face the following challenges:

1. Due to the tension of globalisation of technology, information technology and economy, affluent Western countries very often regard under developed, but highly populated, Asian countries as new potential markets to source for cheap human power and natural resources to exploit in manufacturing their productions.

2. They are universally influenced by the globalisation of social work, in particular the powerful document 'Global Standard for Social Work Education' jointly proposed by the IFSW and IASSW. This document intends to globalise Eurocentric social work definitions, functions and curriculum with insufficient consideration of cultural, political and social diversity in other countries, particularly Asian countries (Yip, 2004).

Nevertheless, they may have their own specific response to all these universal challenges. For example, more Westernised countries like Japan and Singapore with better information technology and economy may have a higher potential to develop their own social work education, and nurture their own welfare system. However, less developed countries like Indonesia and the Philippines may have less potential to nurture their own social work education and social welfare system.

Asian Independence and Interdependence

Asian countries face challenges for independence as well as interdependence due to the globalisation of economy and social work education. Independence implies sufficient resources, power and autonomy to cater to the needs of its citizens and formulate a just and equal society. Interdependence implies not only dependence on other affluent Western counterparts in economy, technology and education, but also with good

exchanges and mutual support among Asian countries themselves. Independence in Asian social work education implies that Asian countries are able to formulate their own social work education in training professional social workers working within their own cultural contexts. Interdependence in Asian social work education implies that Asian countries should also be open to recent developments in Westernised countries and exchanges among Asian countries themselves.

ASIAN RESPONSE TO CHALLENGES OF GLOBALISATION

Asian social workers and social work educators have to respond appropriately to the challenges of globalisation.

Eurocentric Social Work versus Asiacentric Social Work

Instead of relying on the American social work education and social welfare models, which may not be suitable for the unique socio-cultural context of Asian countries, it is the time for Asian countries to consolidate and develop their own indigenised social work practice and education models. These models should combine both Western practice models with traditional Asian cultural heritage and wisdoms. This would help Asians to resolve their psychosocial problems. Second, instead of relying on the knowledge and wisdom from the West, social work and social work education in Asian countries should cultivate the traditional wisdom from its own cultures. In fact, up to now, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism still affect most Asian population (Doi, 1956; Enriquez, 1992; Ho, 1989 and 1995; Ho and others, 2001; Naito and Gielen, 1992; Paranjpe, 1998). It is crucial that social work practice and social work education include all these traditional wisdom in Asiacentric social work practice.

Eurocentric Social Work Education versus Asiacentric Social Work Education

Social work education in Asian countries should include the following subjects in the curriculum for formal social work training to formulate Asiacentric social work education within their social, cultural and political contexts.

1. It should include subjects about the development of international social work around the world. Asian students should not confine their knowledge only within the social work models and social work education development in the USA and the UK. A global view of social work and social work education in other countries can widen their perspective in reflecting the development in other Asian countries.
2. It should include subjects of Asian traditional cultures. In fact, many Asian traditional cultures have their own wisdom and perspectives in interpreting human integrity, human rights, human interaction, and human equality. They all have their own way of

perceiving the meaning of life and ways to handle human prob-
lems. By means of equipping social work students with traditional
wisdom, they can gradually evolve their indigenous practice.

3. It should include analysis and knowledge about the impact of
globalisation of economy and technology. Social work students in
Asian countries should be equipped with the knowledge and sen-
sitivity on how these globalisation movements have influenced
the lives of Asians.

Social Work Education Exchange among Asian Countries

It is interesting to note that exchange of social work practice and social
work education usually happen between Western countries and Asian
countries rather than among Asian countries themselves (Life, 2000;
Midgley, 1981 and 2001; Rowe and others, 2000). Very often, this sort of
exchange seems to be an import or learning from the experiences of so-
cial workers and social work educators from Western countries like the
USA, Canada and the UK (Mayadas and Elliott, 1997; Midgley, 1981).
In fact, exchange of social work and social work education among Asian
countries is crucial due to the following reasons:

1. Asian countries share, to a certain extent, common cultural val-
ues, like respecting the laws of nature belief in the
pre-arrangement of one's fate in previous life; familial and rela-
tional orientation, rather than individualism, individual rights
and individual actualisation as in Western countries.

2. Compared to the West, social work and social work education in
Asian countries may be at an earlier stage of development.
Sharing the puzzles and experiences in this stage of development
within the Asian cultural and political contexts may facilitate
better ways for future development.

3. Politically and economically, Asian countries are interdependent
on each other. This interdependence may mean more common in-
fluence on the development of social work and social work educa-
tion among Asian countries.

4. Different cultures tend to define social work and social work edu-
cation differently. It is better to share different perceptions and
experiences in formulating the natures of social work and social
work education within Asian cultural contexts. A straight adap-
tation of definitions from Western social work and social work
education may not be suitable for Asian cultural contexts.

5. Better exchanges of authentic social work experiences among
Asian countries may be more fruitful and productive in the consoli-
dation of social work and social work education in Asian countries.

Promise in Asian Social Work Education

A better developed Asian social work and social work education will not
only benefit social welfare development in Asian countries, it will also

hold promise to social work and social work education for other countries. First, the re-conceptualisation and articulation of Asian traditional culture in social work education and social work practice can actually spark indigenised wisdom in working with Asian cultural backgrounds. This wisdom can be shared by social work educators and social workers in multicultural countries in working with Asian minorities. Second, many social work practices in Asian countries, especially those in working with social deprivation, poverty, and human inequality (Life, 2000), can be shared with social workers in other countries. Third, Asian traditional wisdom, like Zen and Taoism, actually has profound implications for human beings to face hardship, sufferings and interpersonal conflicts. This wisdom has a lot to contribute in enriching social work intervention, psychotherapy and counselling (Brandon, 1976). Furthermore, the experiences of social work and social work education have a lot to share with their counterparts in South America, East Europe and Africa. Finally, social work and social work educators in Asian countries should work hand in hand with their Western counterparts in resolving problems in worldwide migration movements, infectious diseases, globalisation of economy and technology, and substance abuse problems.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this article is a discussion about the impact of globalisation of social work education in Asian countries. The development of social work education in China, India and Japan has been reviewed. The appropriate responses and promise of Asian social work education in the future are suggested. In fact, under the globalisation of technology and economy, migration and population movement, Asian countries are no longer separated from their Western counterparts. The East and the West are interdependent on each other in working with social problems of global nature.

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