"Social Work in India," says Dr. Titus, "still remains on the medieval level. An attempt is here made to trace the story of the evolution of charity to the organized social work of the modern day. Perhaps such a description will help us analyze and judge our own charities in India in comparison with western charities and see where we stand and whither we are going."

The late Dr. P. M. Titus was Lecturer in Social Work in the Sir Dorabji Tata Graduate School of Social Work (Now the Tata Institute of Social Sciences). He was specially trained for Social Work at the University of Chicago by the late Dr. Holt, who was a visiting Professor for one term in the Tata School (1937-38). Dr. Titus made invaluable contributions to the field of professional social work by his challenging articles and his incisive criticisms of current socio-economic problems.

Charity is as old as history. In its extensiveness it is universal. We see it among the most primitive as well as the most civilized. Its range is unlimited. It varies from the practice of giving indiscriminate alms to highly organized institutional care and well developed scientific social work. The evolution of charity through different intermediate stages into the present day professional social work as we find it in many of the western countries is worthy of study and investigation. This is all the more important as we notice a general parallelism in the growth of charity in the west and in India, up to a certain point. One may even venture to say that as against the modern advance in the West, social work in India still remains on the medieval level. An attempt is here made to trace the story of the evolution of charity to the organized social work of the modern day. Perhaps such a description will help us analyze and judge our own charities in India in comparison with western charities and see where we stand and whither we are going.

Social work, privately organized, does for the poor man what a well-to-do man seeks to do for himself, with the assistance of a number of advisers for whose services he pays or upon whose friendship he relies. It is the channel through which philanthropy seeks to mitigate most directly those consequences of social progress which are unfortunate in their effect upon certain groups and certain individuals. Public Social Welfare is the resultant ultimate recognition by the State of the necessity and usefulness of such services for the welfare of the community at large. That which has been done through private initiative and was supported by voluntary contributions is taken over by the State, supported by taxes and thus made secure and permanent.

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The most characteristic elements of charity are doubtless derived from the feelings and experiences associated with family life. The term charity was first applied to the extension of social obligations beyond the immediate circle of kinship. But whether in a tribal group, religious body or political organization the main idea was that charity was an expression of the primary group feeling. "Taking care of our own" seems to have been the guiding motive in all charity work. Charity was always associated with religion. When it acquired the sanction of religion, it became a personal virtue, a religious duty and a social utility. At its best charity has been the overt expression of the ethical impulse of the sensitive man to identify himself with the needs and sufferings of his fellowman. It represents the application of the golden rule in social relations; the practice of "Dharma" in responsible living. Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and all other world religions have exhorted their respective members to give charity. But in actual practice, and in the development of organized charities throughout the ages, we find that extension was possible only by changing the note from pure altruism to personal gain. The doctrine of the religious merit of almsgiving became the cornerstone of all charities of the Christian churches in the West up to the 16th century.

In its early stage, the philanthropy of the church was mainly due to a natural sense of solidarity in a numerically weak community living in a hostile world. The eschatological hope had also created a heedlessness for any earthly care or possessions. But with the passing of the eschatological hope; with the waning of the feelings that the Christian was only a temporary sojourner in this strange world; when the expectation of the speedy return of the Lord receded, much of the enthusiasm for open-handed philanthropy ceased. Moral exhortations were not enough to enlist support for charitable work. At the same time the need for charity became greater. Individuals had to be coaxed to give alms, by offering some personal gain for this voluntary act of mercy. Forgiveness of personal sins and ensuring the salvation of one's soul were offered in exchange for liberal contributions to church charities. "If there were no poor the greater part of your sins would not be removed; they are the healers of your wounds," so said St. Chrysostum. Almsgiving was the patent medicine for the cure of the disease of sin. Thus, aiding the poor was not end in itself, but a means by which the almsgiver effected his own ultimate purpose of saving his soul and "made God his debtor." The worst part of such a practice was that there was complete disregard of the effect of such indiscriminate almsgiving upon the individual beneficiary. Almsgiving became impersonal. While the doctrine stimulated a spirit of self-sacrifice and of helpfulness, it encouraged begging and idleness. The usefulness of the spreading of the doctrine of the religious merit of almsgiving was that it served the development of extensive philanthropy and led to the relief of much suffering in a day when everyone lived in his own little neighbourhood group and regarded all outsiders with suspicion. The good work of caring for the poor was to be carried on. Perhaps the most effective way to get support was to offer the reward of salvation which was believed to be within the province of the church to grant.

The principal agencies of relief which were organized in those days under the auspices of the church were the monasteries, the hospital orders, the hospitals which grew out of the earlier xenodochia, the religious fraternities, the alms of individuals and the religious loan banks.
Care of the poor, visiting the sick, lending money at low rates of interest, and similar eleemosynary activities were the main features of these ecclesiastical charity institutions in the Middle Ages.

Apart from the institutional charities of the church we find a system of well organized mutual aid practised in the medieval communities. The social structure of the middle ages may be described as an enormous number of small and practically independent units. Within these local groups, be it manor, parish, guild, or religious community, everyone was intimately acquainted with everyone else. There was a sort of primary group relationship and mutual aid was as natural and spontaneous as it could be under such circumstances. Self-sufficient, isolated, fixed social units, organized for self-preservation and mutual support within their respective limits, served as dynamic centers of socialibility and mutuality. But the circle was limited and relation with outsiders and members of other communities was usually one of hostility. There was little social contact with people beyond the local group in which they lived, worked, played and worshipped. There was no need for organized charity, because misfortunes were not faced individually but collectively. The burden was shared by all neighbours. Very similar to the manor, and sometimes identical with it, was the parish. Priests were to take tithes from the parishioners and a third of the amount received they were "in all humanity mercifully to distribute with their own hands for the use of the poor and strangers." It was not lack of mutual aid within the parish that necessitated this form of organized charity. This form of charity was meant for those strangers in the parish who were detached from their own primary groups.

The medieval guilds were a sort of closed corporations of monopoly, within which there was a close community of interests. Mutual aid and neighbourliness were as simple and unaffected within the guilds as in any other primary group. But relief was given almost exclusively to members of the respective guilds.

Thus, the secular units of organizations cared for their own by practising simple neighbourliness. The ecclesiastical charities took care of the needy strangers through institutional care and open almsgiving. The source of support for the latter was voluntary donations collected by appealing to individual desire for personal salvation. It was ameliorative and not constructive; curative and not preventive. There was no thought of reconstruction of society to eradicate the institution of beggary. In fact, for the salvation of the souls of the rich donors of charity, poor recipients of alms were necessary.

"The established folk saw in the wanderers means of divine grace for themselves. The unfortunate and the needy were regarded as an asset! It was not necessary to put themselves in the places of the poor.... On the other hand, the beggars saw in the rich simply possible sources of food and clothing. On neither side was there recognition of human personality in its richness and fullness. The mental image was highly refined abstraction rather than a recognition of man as man."

Howsoever reprehensible such an attitude might be, one should not overlook the fact that medieval religion as such, never lost sight of the social obligation of caring for the poor. The expression of social consciousness in those days, consistent with the mood of the times, was not so refined and enlightened as to be normative for all times.

But society could not remain static. Social changes had to come. The old feudal fixed and isolated communities were to break down due to pressure of political, economic, social and religious changes. Increase of commerce, during and after the Crusades, gave rise to the growth of innumerable towns. Rise of nationalism knocked out the already week props of feudalism. The abuses of the church, especially in the field of raising funds for church charities by selling "indulgences" brought in the protestant revolution. Thus, different social and political units were organized in the West on the lines of new cleavages that came in after the middle ages. These radical social changes had their effect on the development and organization of charity in western countries in the subsequent period.

With the rise of the townships, there came the organisation and growth of municipal charities. With a larger and more heterogeneous population, much more mobile and extensive than any medieval group, the need for organized charities on secular lines became a necessity. The early municipal charities were more personal than the indiscriminate almsgiving that preceded and accompanied them; they were less personal than the mutual aid of the simpler group. But the change was more important, in that it was both a transfer of power to a secular civic body, and also an assumption of responsibility by a geographical community, rather than by an exclusive religious fraternity or vocational guild. It was the extension of the principle of municipal charity that subsequently developed into the public charities of the state. After the Industrial Revolution, when life in the industrial centres became extremely impersonal, and when the population in such areas became heterogeneous and mobile, such public charities became indispensable. Dissolution of early forms of church charities left the poor without any door to go to. Political and economic changes set loose a vast mass of uprooted humanity. Repressive measures proved to be abortive. Necessity, as well as civic consciousness, led to the initiation of public assistance in the early days.

Another important factor to be reckoned with is the Protestant Reformation. Breaking away from the Mother Church, Protestantism developed new strands of thought and behaviour. It put the individual at the centre both in regard to personal moral responsibility and social duty. The revulsion against the old theory of personal reward for charitable work was great. The ground work of the theory of charity was recast. The conception of personal reward here or hereafter to the donor of charity was eliminated. The deed was good only in the same sense in which the doer was good; it had in itself no merit. The appeal of charity was to the moral and social consciousness of the individual. Private charity of Protestant churches in the West thus developed as a result of the growth of the moral and social consciousness of their members. The basis of charity thus became the needs of the recipients of charity rather than the benefits the donor might accrue by giving charity. Charity was interpreted as contributive to the welfare of the community at large.

This new orientation revolutionized the philosophy and technique of charity. The Protestant Reformation together with the growth of urban areas with their incidental complexity and social problems, initiated new kinds of charity. In fact, charity graduated into a more sensible form of constructive social work. The origin and growth of the English Poor Law of the 17th century is an illustration. It developed a new technique. The English Poor Law represents the development of a consciousness of national responsibility for dealing with the problem of poverty. Begging was repressed. In the earlier stages it organized, regulated and defined the
relief which was actually administered by the units of local government. Later it organized a national system of relief. Finally it led to old age pensions, and health and unemployment insurance as parts of national programme to diminish the amount of poverty and misery.

Another contribution of the English Poor Law system was the gradual development of a consciousness of the futility of mere relief. The case-work method in social work evolved out of the experiences of the administrators of poor relief.

It must also be mentioned that the growth of the democratic tradition contributed a great deal towards the new outlook and interpretation of charity. The older method of benevolent patronizing—of throwing crumbs to the poor—was no longer consistent with the democratic ideology. It was to be social work—work to salvage society from disintegration and chaos arising out of inequality and callousness. Provision of a decent standard of living for all citizens was accepted as one of the cardinal principles and goals of the democratic way of life. Individual needs were not to be only temporarily ameliorated; the community was to be built up by taking care of all the factors and elements that go to make up a good community.

Alongside of the development of such a trend of thought, new problems in greater magnitude began to confront social workers. The rise of capitalism, especially after the Industrial Revolution, challenged all social thinkers with various problems. The growth of industrial and commercial centres brought together a large concourse of working class people into congested areas. The insanitary factories, crowded houses, long hours, low wages, employment of women and young children, periods of industrial depression accompanied by unemployment and monotonous existence, presented a real challenge to those interested in their fellowmen. Along with these new problems came the break-down of customs, habits and morals. There was general social disorganization.

The recognized tasks that the Industrial Revolution set for 19th century social work included: protection of health through sanitation of factories, housing and medical service; provision of regular employment with adequate remuneration; provision for disability and old age; protection of children; education; recreation; prevention of racial conflicts; care of the new immigrants and all sorts of other new problems which were not present or at least were not recognized in the old order of society. There was to be a new basis of social organization.

Different groups, classes and interests responded to this new situation with different methods of treatment and varying motives. The exploited victims of the new factory system began to organize and revolt against the injustices they had to suffer. As a result of social agitation both by the workers themselves and also by socially conscious philanthropists and social workers, social legislation was enacted for the protection of the disadvantaged classes. There was also the organization of social work by the middle class "uplifters."

The religious groups—Protestant, Catholic and Jewish—established many social service agencies to take care of the needy among their respective communicants. Protestant Churches, especially of the Calvinistic tradition, started many institutions like Neighbourhood Houses and Social Settlements to promote activities in community-building. Many non-sectarian agencies were started by the protestant laity.
There was also a line of pseudo-philanthropy which extended charity to "keep the workers contented." During John Wesley's days, the aristocratic group in England, so it is told, resented the social service programme very much in the beginning. But they were gratified and co-operated when they recognized that Wesley's programme had saved England from an economic revolution by the uprising of the disinherited masses. Even to-day we see instances of such pseudo-philanthropy, seeking to maintain the status quo rather than eradicate social evils. Many a gift to charity has been part of an effort to make the feudalism of industry benevolent and therefore acceptable—and at the same time to preserve its feudal status. This kind of benevolence has often prevented the growth of economic democracy.

Numerous industrial concerns set up welfare departments of their own for the benefit of their employees. Such work often savoured more of gratuity and patronage than of co-operation; of benevolence rather than justice. Some of the labour leaders in America interpreted such welfare work as chloroforming the workers, keeping them from organizing. But so long as capitalistic industrial organization is continued on a feudal basis, such welfare work at its best is something done by employers for their employees because of real humanitarian interest in the workmen for their own sake. At its worst, it is a scheme for more complete control of the working people by the owners of industry—a mere camouflage for exploitation.

But after we have discounted the social climbers, the cheap politicians, the Ladies Bountiful and the poseurs, and given recognition to the truly benevolent bourgeoisie, there is to be noted a band of genuine social workers for whom social work was not charity, but public service. For them it was not a spare-time diversion nor a means to some private end. It was a full-time job to which steady application and whole-hearted devotion were spontaneous and essential.

The appalling conditions of the poor and the lack of any co-ordination and co-operation between the many private societies that sprung up in the early days led to overindulgence, neglect, fraud and all other kinds of abuses. The Charity Organization Movement of the latter part of the last century was an effort to improve the condition of the poor and co-ordinate the existing societies. The Charity Organization Societies which were started with very modest ambitions contributed a great deal to the field of modern social work. The C.O.S. helped in the correlation of many agencies. It organized a system of relief which eliminated duplication and neglect. Perhaps the greatest contribution of the C.O.S. has been the development of what is called today the "case method" of analysing and treating human problems. The study and treatment of each individual and family as a unique problem by the "case method" made social work more intimate, personal and effective. The emergence of social work as a well defined profession and the growing emphasis laid on professional qualifications for social workers may be traced back to the C.O.S.

With the increasing number of social service agencies in the modern era there was greater necessity for co-ordination of these agencies. A group of agencies began to
specialize in co-ordinating and unifying social work. Conferences—national, regional, state and local—served to weld together social workers and create common interests. Professional and functional organizations also furthered unity and recognized standards. Councils of social agencies, organized in major cities, now develop co-operation, help in raising standards of work, do research work and encourage central planning. Financial federations, like Community Chests and Community Trusts, are organized for co-operative budget-making and money-raising in most of the important western cities. Foundations with large assets have been established to support organized philanthropy and social work.

Diversity of social problems demanded specialised forms of treatment. Social work began to get defined in different specialised forms. The catch-all charitable institutions of early days gave way to specialised services under professional leadership. This led to the development of many functional groupings such as family services and relief agencies; agencies for the care of the aged; different types of services to children, such as foster-home care, institutional care for the destitute, disabled and handicapped; juvenile court work; employment and vocational guidance; protective services; group work, recreation and informal education; different types of health services; industrial welfare work, etc. If we glance through the social service directory of any of the major cities in the West, we discover the highly developed functional organization of private social work.

Alongside of the development of specialization of services came specialization of techniques. This led to the professionalization of social work, and professional schools for training social workers were started. Organising ability and expert training became more important than strong sentiment and “inspired” leadership. Social workers today are expected to have refined technical skill.

Emphasis has been laid by private social agencies on preventive and constructive measures. Social investigation and surveys have been made to furnish the basis of remedial and preventive activities as well as to educate the public on social needs.

The benefits of co-operation between private social agencies cannot be over-emphasized. In the matter of raising funds alone, we find that organization of community chests for the joint-financing of private social agencies in the major cities of America has been extremely helpful. Community chests were organized to avoid duplication of effort and equipment, and reduce competition and expense in money-raising. The annual concerted drive for the support of co-operating social agencies has helped in the raising of larger amounts and also avoiding confusion and restiveness in the minds of the subscribing public. The appreciation of the success of such efforts in joint financing is revealed in the rapid growth in the number of community chests.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Chests in existence</th>
<th>Amount raised annually in dollars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22,437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14,224,740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>48,850,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>72,743,916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>75,108,792</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>83,213,428</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of community chests increased since 1931 and almost all the major cities have such joint-financing agencies. The chest is accepted today as a permanent method of financing social work. All evidence indicates that it has stimulated systematic giving for social welfare activities.

Community trusts which have developed in the United States within the last 30 years are for the support of local activities. In the case of trusts the fund is permanent rather than annually collected and expended. Contributions are made to the trusts either in the form of gifts or bequests. More than 75 cities had set up community trusts by 1931, and their aggregate funds amounted to more than $35,000,000.\(^3\) In addition to this there are Philanthropic Foundations with heavy endowments. In 1931 there were 350 such Foundations. The total assets of the 20 largest Foundations in that year amounted to about $860,000,000.\(^4\)

The amount of money contributed annually through voluntary subscriptions for recurring expenses for the private social agencies in the large cities may be illustrated by taking a single city like Chicago. Chicago with a population of nearly 3½ millions has some 500 private social agencies. The financial statements of 262 of the more important of the 500 agencies show that including capital gifts a total of 11 million dollars were contributed through voluntary subscriptions in 1938. If the total contributions for all the 500 agencies of Chicago were taken, we could safely assume that the annual per capita voluntary contribution for private social agencies in Chicago was $5,00 that year.\(^5\) The per capita giving to organised social work in Chicago is exceeded by most of the major centres of population in the United States.

The story of the evolution and development of private charities in the western countries is, in general, the story of the growth of community consciousness. Private charities have not been content in continuing their services for all time depending on voluntary contributions of private citizens. In the course of history we find that the isolated philanthropy of one generation became the organized charity of the next, and finally a public charge. Private social agencies have been instrumental in the promotion of much progressive social legislation. The policy has generally been to initiate a variety of socially necessary services, experiment with methods of administration and then seek to secure permanent financial support from tax-funds when the services appear to be a legitimate public undertaking. The absorption of social service activities as a part of public administration has been going on at an accelerated rate during the last two decades. The private agencies of to-day both supplement the public welfare agencies and blaze new trails. The relationship is not competing but co-operative. It is recognized that in experimenting, promoting and maintaining standards, in using imagination and a flexible approach to social problems, the private organization has a great advantage.

In the field of public welfare, the underlying concepts and philosophy have undergone revision, away from the old condescending charity and philanthropy to the newer ideals of democratic service. The theory that the tax-payers of the community must provide the necessities of life for those unable to provide such necessaries for themselves is accepted today as sound and valid in democratic countries.

\(^3\)Ibid., p. 1208.
\(^4\)Ibid., p. 1203.
\(^5\)Chicago Daily News, October 24, 1938.
The advance made in this direction can be noticed when we look at the list of public assistance programmes undertaken by governments both in Europe and America. Towards guaranteeing social security: unemployment insurance, old-age pensions, blind persons' pensions, family endowments and allied measures have already been taken. Statutory regulation of wages and hours of work in factories has been initiated to protect the workers from exploitation. National health insurance schemes are already functioning. Public housing projects have been started to re-house the slum-dwellers in decent quarters. Large amounts of money are spent for public relief. Institutions of all kinds to take care of the dependent, destitute and handicapped are maintained at public cost.

Since 1933, after the initiation of the New Deal Programme by President Roosevelt, public welfare activities have increased extensively in the United States. Humanitarianism, together with a more sincere effort to translate the ideals of democracy into concrete action, have inspired the modern developments in America. Social welfare has at least been fully accepted as one of the recognized objectives of the National Government. The best defence of democracy is increasingly recognized as democracy itself.

In the light of this brief history of charities in western countries, we can judge the status of our own charities. Much of our charity is still based on the doctrine of the religious merit of almsgiving. It is shocking to hear a Hindu Mayor of a large city objecting to a scheme for the elimination of beggary by establishing a poor house, on the ground that such an action will be prejudicial to Hindu religion and Indian culture. He maintains that if the poor are not in the easy reach of the public, the latter will not have opportunities to give alms and thereby accrue religious merit. He wants to keep them in our midst to keep us humble. As in Medieval Europe, indiscriminate almsgiving is continued here in India without any regard for the consequences so far as the recipients are concerned. Much of the misery and suffering of the poor are interpreted in terms of "karma" or "kismet." Institutional charities are organized on communal lines rather than on a community basis. Comparatively, our public welfare programmes are far too thin and halting. We often boast of our old culture and are maintaining that the Indian concept of society is that of an organic unity. We often repeat to ourselves that "Dharma" reveals the soul of India. But Dharma in practice is far from being satisfactory.

To be sure there is much talk on political platforms about the sad fate of the "dumb millions" of India. Different panaceas are suggested by different groups and different persons. Many programmes give evidence of little thought, and very often one suspects there is too much concern to be original rather than be practical. The rise of Nationalism has made us turn our back on everything alien. To be lamenting over the good old days of glory and contentment, to find a scapegoat for all our ills and then go about with slogans, "back to the villages," "back to handicrafts," "back to our own culture," are not going to get us anywhere. We cannot go back even if we want to. We are not living in isolation. Times have changed and the world has changed. Intelligent planning means the use of the accumulated wisdom of all times and all climes and then to try to solve our problems in the light of such wisdom and knowledge.

What can we do? So far as the expansion of public social welfare programmes are concerned, times and circumstances are such that we cannot do much in
It is the major cities that can take the lead in this direction. Here in Bombay there are about five hundred charity agencies. There is no co-ordination, no co-operation, no sharing of experiences, no co-operative discussion of problems. We have not yet begun to think in terms of Bombay city as a whole, as an urban community. Parsees, Hindus, Muslims, and other communities run their respective charity institutions to render aid to the needy in their own communities. The first thing we can do is to organize a Council of Social Agencies, enlisting as members as many charity institutions as are willing to affiliate. This Council can start out as a fact-finding and consultative body, with a professionally efficient staff. The Councils of Social Agencies in the major cities of the West are composed of member institutions which are as varied as they are here. But they have learned by experience the value of such co-operation, so that majority of the institutions belong to such councils.

Such a Council, if and when organized, can initiate a plan for the financing of social agencies in Bombay. Now each institution is dependent on the good-will of a specific limited constituency of supporters. At the same time philanthropically inclined people are bothered too often and by too many different institutions with appeals for funds for this or that institution. A City Fund on the lines of the Community Chests in America can easily be organized to make the present operating agencies more secure and also to avoid confusion in the minds of subscribers to charity agencies. A concerted drive for funds, with sufficient data gathered to educate the public about the social needs of the city, will certainly bring in larger funds and many other intangible results. The urgent need is to have a co-operative body of social workers to launch a programme of public education in regard to the urgent needs of social work in the city.

There is enough cosmopolitanism and broad-mindedness in Bombay to take the initiative in this matter. Bombay can lead the way for other major cities to follow. Nowhere have we seen any instance of any evil arising out of co-operative activity. There is no reason to believe that there will be any danger if we try such an experiment in the field of social work. The only question is whether we have sufficient good-will, imagination and public-mindedness to begin.