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Gross Enrollment Rate for Social Work Education and Career Prospective in India

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ABSTRACT: The study aims to analyse the students' gross enrollment rate in Social Work education and what are the career prospects in India. The purpose of the study was to Compare enrollment in Social Work Education Institutions (SWEIs) in India, analyse the Social Work Education status in India and draw recommendations for Social Work Education in India based on AISHE 2015-16 to 2020-21 reports. A multi-stage methodology was adopted to map Social Work Education Institutions (SWEIs) in India and time series data from the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) from 2015 to 2020 reports were analysed to find out the trend for Social Work Education in India. The study found that to make India an *Atmanirbar* (self-reliant), the role of Social Work professionals is vital and envisaged how the National Education Policy 2020(NEP-2020) has created ample opportunity for School Social Workers and also drew recommendations to transform Social Work education with indigenous knowledge to robust Social Work praxis at field level. The findings provide evidence of the trend of social work education in India. The NEP 2020 has brought momentum for social work professional education by introducing school social worker posts; however, there are many issues with regard to a common curriculum with indigenous fieldwork practice across India. Furthermore, NGOs and industrial collaborations in curriculum development must be strengthened.

Keywords: Social Work Education Institutions; All India Survey on Higher Education; social workers; the National Education Policy 2020

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According to the University Grants Commission's report on Social Work Education in Indian Universities 1965, the first short-term social work course was established in 1920 by the Social Service League in Bombay. It was a short-term course for public welfare volunteers. The Nagpada Neighbourhood House's services for the industrial labouring classes highlighted the need for skilled workers at the time, resulting in the establishment of the Sir Dorabji Tata Graduate School of Social Work in 1936, which began full-fledged professional education in social work. This institute was renamed the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) later on (D'Souza, 1978).

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TISS was India's only institution for social work training for 11 years, from 1936 to 1947, till independence (Kendall, 2000). Kashi Vidyapeeth began its course in Ahmedabad after independence, providing social work education since 1947. With financial assistance from the Foreign division of the American Young Women's Christian Association, the Young Women's Christian Association of India established the Delhi School of Social Work in 1948, which was recognised by the University of Delhi. Baroda also began teaching social work in a university setting. Lucknow University also began offering a Diploma in Social Service at the J.K. Institute of Sociology and Human Relations, which was later replaced by a Master of Social Technique and, finally, a Master of Social Work (Dane, 2022).

The Indian Conference of Social Workers (ICSW, 1947), in collaboration with the Council on Social Work Education, shaped the Indian social work curriculum in its early stages through the Technical Cooperation Mission Programme of the United States of America. According to Dr. Manshardt, the academic curriculum for social work must focus on three core areas: social case work, public welfare administration, and social legislation. The UGC established the first review committee for social work education in 1960, followed by the second in 1975. This report was written with the idea that any profession must reflect on its past and look forward to its future in order to equip its education for practise (Social Work Second Review Committee Report, 1975).

Because India and the United States have different development policies, the demand for social work education in India differs from that in the United States. They emphasised the importance of social action, social policy, and social administration education. The Curriculum Development Centre in Social Work Education report, sponsored by the UGC, was published in 1990. In 1999, the third review committee of social work education was formed. In 2001, the UGC also published a model curriculum for social work education. In 1948, TISS was the first school to offer a specialisation in social work education. Specialisations in social work fields, methods, and roles emerged. The Factories Act of 1948 mandated the appointment of Labour Welfare Officers in factories employing more than 500 workers. They must have a background in Personnel Management and Industrial Relations. Personnel Management and Industrial Relations has been an independent Master's programme since 1969 (Pathak, 1981).

The Health Survey and Development Committee's reports were published in 1946 to help develop medical and psychiatric social work. It emphasised the importance of establishing social service departments in hospitals as well as the need for psychiatric social workers (Bhugra, 1992). In 1949, the Department of Family and Child Welfare and the Public Welfare Administration were established. The Correctional Administration Department of Criminology was established in 1952 to train personnel for prison work and juvenile courts. The Department of Urban and Rural Community Development was established the same year in response to the growing interest shown in community development

projects by the federal and state governments (Social Work in India, 1950).

Murali Desai (2005) introduced six-course modules for Social Work Education in her book "Ideologies and Social Work Historical and Contemporary Analysis," namely, western history of ideologies of Social Change, Western history of ideologies of Social Work profession, Indian history of ideologies for social change, Indian history of ideologies of Social Work profession, contemporary ideologies for Social Change, and contemporary ideologies for Social Work profession (Desai, 2005). Based on course recommendations these courses were included in the core domain of the model curriculum developed by the University Grant Commission in 2001.

The University Grant Commission introduced a Model Social Work curriculum based on the Learning Outcome-based Curriculum Framework (LOCF) in response to the National Education Policy 2020, which seeks to pave the way for flexible and lifelong learning and encourages students to choose their academic path leading to the award of a certificate, diploma, or degree. As a result, the Multiple Entry and Exit System (MEES) is at the heart of the new National Education Policy for higher education (Bhadauria, 2023). Major and minor subjects and electives have been introduced in higher education to tailor this policy new model curriculum LOCF was introduced to adopt in Social Work Education in higher education institutes of India (Ministry of Human Resource Development , 2020).

Gross Enrollment Ratio in Higher Education in India

India's higher education system has grown to be one of the world's largest of its kind. In AISHE 2020-21, 1,113 Universities, 43,796 Colleges, and 11,296 Stand Alone Institutions were registered. One thousand nine hundred universities, 41,600 colleges, and 10,307 stand-alone institutions have completed and verified their responses (AISHE, 2020).

The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in Higher Education in India is 27.1, calculated for the age group 18-23. The male population has a GER of 26.9, while the female population has a GER of 27.3. It is 23.4 for Scheduled Castes and 18.0 for Scheduled Tribes, compared to the national GER of 27.1. Distance education accounts for approximately 11.1% of total higher education enrollment, with 44.5% of students being female. Approximately 79.5% of students are enrolled in Undergraduate level programmes. Ph.D. students account for approximately 0.5% of total student enrollment. The B.A. programme has the most students enrolled, followed by the B.Sc. and B.Com. Programmes. Ten programmes out of approximately 196 cover approximately 79% of all students enrolled in higher education.

Undergraduate students are most likely to be enrolled in Arts/Humanities/Social Sciences courses, followed by Science 16%, Commerce 14.9%, and Engineering and Technology 12.6%. The Engineering and Technology stream enrols the most students at the Ph.D. level, followed by Science. At the postgraduate level, however, the majority of students are enrolled in the Social Science stream, with Science coming in second. Uttar Pradesh has the highest student enrollment, followed by

Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. Scheduled Casts students account for 14.7% of total enrollment, while Scheduled Tribes students account for 5.6%. 37% of students are from Other Backward Classes. 5.5% of students are Muslim, and 2.3% are from other minority groups. There are 49,348 foreign students enrolled in higher education.

Foreign students come from 168 different countries around the world. The top ten countries account for 63.9% of all foreign students enrolled. The neighbouring countries have the highest proportion of foreign students, with Nepal accounting for 28.1% of the total, Afghanistan accounting for 9.1%, Bangladesh accounting for 4.6%, Bhutan accounting for 3.8%, and Sudan accounting for 3.6%. There are more than 78.6% of colleges in the private sector, both aided and unaided, but they only serve 66.3% of the total enrolment.

The total number of teachers is 15,03,156, with approximately 57.5% being male teachers and 42.5% being female teachers. At the national level, there are only 74 female teachers for every 100 male teachers. Female students make up the smallest proportion of students at Institutions of National Importance, followed by Deemed University-Government and State Private Universities.

Objectives of the study

- Compare enrollment to Social Work Education Institutions (SWEIs) in India
- Analyse the Social Work Education status in India
- Draw recommendations for Social Work Education in India based on AISHE 2015-16 to 2020-21 reports

Method and Materials

A multi-stage methodology was adopted to map Social Work Education Institutions (SWEIs) in India and time series data from the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2020-21 report was analysed to assess the growth of Social Work Education Institutions (SWEIs) in India in addition to that country, zone, gender and category wise students enrollment to Bachelors and Masters in Social Work education from 2015-16 to 2020-21 academic years were analysed with discussion. Analysed present and future Social Work Education in India and drew recommendations for Social Work Education in India based on AISHE reports.

Findings and Discussion

Table 1. State Wise Distribution of Social Work Education Institutions in India

State	Number of SWEIs	Percentage
Tamil Nadu	104	19.77
Madhya Pradesh	71	13.50
Maharashtra	66	12.55
Kerala	43	8.17

Andhra Pradesh	42	7.98
Karnataka	38	7.22
Gujarat	35	6.65
Uttar Pradesh	22	4.18
Telangana	14	2.66
Assam, Odisha Rajasthan & Uttarakhand	36 (9 in each state)	6.84 (1.71in each state)
Chhattisgarh	8	1.52
Haryana	6	1.14
Delhi & Meghalaya	10 (5 in each state)	1.90 (0.95 in each state)
Bihar, Jharkhand & West Bengal	12 (4 in each state)	2.28 (0.76 in each state)
Manipur & Puducherry (UT)	6 (3 in each state)	1.14 (0.57 in each state)
Chandigarh (UT), Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Mizoram &Nagaland	10 (2 in each state)	1.90 (0.38 in each state)
Arunachal Pradesh, Goa & Punjab	3 (1 in each state)	0.57 (0.19 in each state)
Total	526	100.0

(Source: Bhatt and Phukan, 2016) (Bhatt & Phukan, 2016)

Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra have nearly the same number of SWEIs (66 SWEIs). It is worth noting that nearly 80% of SWEIs are concentrated in eight states (Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Maharastra, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Gujarat, and Uttar Pradesh). The data also shows that the states in the Southern and Western zones have the highest proportion of SWEIs in the country. The northern and central zones of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, respectively, have 17.68 percent of the country's SWEIs. In the remaining states, the number of SWEIs is in the single digits, with many being of recent origin, i.e. less than a decade old Except for Tripura, all states and two union territories (UT), Andaman Nicobar Island and Lakshadweep, are currently providing social work education and training.

Table No 2: Distribution of SWEIs in different Zones, States and Union Territories (UTs)

Zone	States & Union Territories	Number of SWEIs	Percentage(%)
North	Chandigarh (UT), Delhi, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan	27	5.13
West	Goa, Gujarat, Maharashtra	102	19.39

Central	Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh	110	20.91
East	Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal	21	4.00
North-East	Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura	22	4.18
South	Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Pondicherry (UT), Tamil Nadu, Telangana	244	46.39
	Total	526	100.00

(Source: Bhatt and Phukan, 2015)

The above table delineates the distribution of Social Work Educational Institutions in different Zones, States and Union Territories (UTs). South zone has more than 244 SWEIs where 46.39 percent of students enrolled in Social Work education reported, followed by 110 SWEIs in the central zone of India with 20.91percent enrollment reported, in the west zone of India constitute where 20.91 percent of students enrolled, the west zone of India 102 SWEIs constituted with 19.39 students enrolled and North, North East and East zone 70 SWEIs constituted with 30.31 students enrolled.

Social Work Education Status in India

The AISHE reports provide specific information about the specialization-wise number of colleges and this information has been compiled for 31 subjects within the AISHE. Social work is taught in approximately twenty percent of universities (181 out of 993) in the country. Information on colleges having Social work as a specific subject was first included in the AISHE year 2016-17, reporting 26 Social Work colleges, which is now reported to be 47 in 2018-19. There was no official and authentic information on the exact number of SWEIs in the country, as estimation ranges from 260 SWEIs in 2003 to around 650 SWEIs in 2 2013. However, 526 SWEIs were reported, as an outcome of a census study (Bhatt and Phukan, 2016).

More than half (59.12 percent) of the institutions are teaching undergraduate courses in social work. There were 67086 students enrolled in BSW courses and 48711 in MSW courses during 2018-19. In nine years (2010-11 to 2018-19), there were almost 298233 students enrolled in BSW courses, with an average of 107 students per college per year; and precisely 97238 more students enrolled in the MSW programme (395561 students). Male students outnumbered female students in both courses. The share of students enrolled through distance mode of education in the BSW programme is even less than one-fourth (22 percent) and in the MSW programme, it is almost one-third (34.09 percent). Social work has a very small share (1.50 percent) among courses opted for by 47,427 foreign students enrolled in higher education across the country. Student enrollment in social work at the M. Phil level has witnessed a sudden decline due to the decision of the University Grants Commission (UGC) to scrap the

M. Phil degree from the higher education system. However, there has been a consistent increase in the number of scholars enrolled in the Ph.D. programme. While social work has a very small share (1.50 percent) in foreign student enrollment, there has been a consistent increase in students coming from foreign countries and enrolling in MSW courses in the past nine years. India has added around 3.60 lakh BSWs/MSWs in the past eight years, averaging forty-five thousand professional social workers per year. The future of the social work profession shall heavily rely upon two aspects - education and services; influenced by four dominant changes - changes in the socio-political environment, changes in human relationships and social space, changes in technology, and changes in globalization processes and global agenda.

According to All India Survey on Higher Education 2019-20 specialization MSW offering institutes, highest i.e., 36 institutions in Maharashtra offering specialisations followed by 12 institutes in Karnataka, 7 institutions in Gujarat, 2 institutions in Odisha and 1 each institution from Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Tamilnadu, Manipur and Mizoram (Fakrul).

According to the All India Survey on Higher Education 2019-20 Programme-wise Enrolment (Based on actual Response) there were 15847 students enrolled on MSW courses across India for regular mode. Whereas, 14300 students have joined the MSW course for distance mode for IGNOU (Indira Gandhi National Open University) (AISHE, 2021).

Table No. 3: Enrollment-wise Distribution to Bachelor of Social Work (Under Graduation in Social Work)

BSW	Scheduled Tribe			Scheduled Caste			Other Backward Classes			All		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2015-16	1553	1548	3101	1806	1582	3388	3583	3082	6665	10426	9584	20010
2016-17	5943	5452	11395	4254	3185	7439	10276	7399	17675	27346	22299	49645
2017-18	3882	4190	8072	10841	9277	20118	8681	8205	16886	31319	28679	59998
2018-19	5577	6027	11604	10542	9165	19707	10144	9769	19913	33951	32985	66936
2019-20	4809	5588	10397	6542	7281	13823	8950	9201	18151	27145	29809	56954
2020-21	3118	3866	6984	2918	2498	5416	4500	4522	9022	15092	16416	31508
Total	24882	26671	51553	36903	32988	69891	46134	42178	88312	145279	139772	285051
Percent	8.72	9.35	18.08	12.94	11.57	24.51	16.18	14.79	30.98	50.96	49.03	100
Increased %	100.7	149.7	125.2	61.5	57.9	59.8	25.5	46.7	35.3	44.7	71.2	57.4

(AISHE, 2021), (AISHE, 2020), (AISHE, 2018), (AISHE, 2019), (AISHE, 2016), (AISHE, 2017).

The above table delineates the category-wise distribution of students enrolled in Bachelors in Social Work. Total enrollment across India to Bachelor's Social Work from academic years 2015-16 to 2020-21 was 285051, among the highest 50.96 percent were male the rest 49.03 percent were female.

Category-wise distribution of the students enrolled on Under Graduation in Social Work shows the highest 30.98 percent belongs to OBCs, followed by 24.51 percent from Scheduled Castes and 18.08 percent from Scheduled Tribes.

In all categories, we noticed highest number of students who enrolled were female. Social work is often described as a female-dominated profession, but one in which men disproportionately occupy senior roles. Yet, McPhail has argued that "social work is more correctly described as a female majority, male-dominated profession" (McPhail, 2004).

Table No. 4: Enrollment-wise Distribution to Regular Masters of Social Work Education (Post Graduation in Social Work)

	Scheduled Tribe			Scheduled Caste			Other Backward Classes			All		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2015-16	2438	2464	4902	5124	3587	8711	8902	6936	15838	25106	22256	47362
2016-17	3197	2632	5829	5806	3801	9607	7908	7055	14963	25370	22956	48326
2017-18	3086	3054	6140	5993	4414	10407	7105	6919	14024	24060	22753	46813
2018-19	3329	3535	6864	5839	4860	10699	7231	7976	15207	22900	25648	48548
2019-20	4125	4346	8471	6175	5770	11945	7253	8594	15847	24480	28991	53471
2020-21	5330	5249	10579	6227	6079	12306	7308	8947	16255	27155	32310	59465
Total	21505	21280	42785	35164	28511	63975	45707	46427	92134	149071	154914	303985
Percent	7.07	7.0	14.07	11.56	9.37	21.04	15.03	15.27	30.30	49.04	50.96	100
Increase in %	118.62	113.02	115.80	21.52	69.47	41.26	-11.91	28.99	2.63	8.16	45.17	25.55

(AISHE, 2021), (AISHE, 2020), (AISHE, 2018), (AISHE, 2019), (AISHE, 2016), (AISHE, 2017).

The above table delineates the category-wise distribution of students enrolled on the Masters in Social Work from 2015 to 2020. Total enrollment across India for Masters in Social Work was 303985, among them highest was 154914 female students rest 149071 were male. From 2015-16 to the 2020-21 academic year female enrolment substantially increased from 22256 to 32310 (45.17 percent increase) and male enrolment gradually raised from 25106 to 27155 (8.16 percent increase). Category-wise distribution of students enrolment in Post Graduation in Social Work 30.30 percent of them belonged to Other Backward Castes (OBCs), 21.04 percent of them belonged to Scheduled Castes, 14.07 percent of them belonged to Scheduled Tribes.

From a total enrollment of students to Post Graduation in Social Work increase of percent from

2015-16 academic years to 2020-21 was 25.55, with an increase of 115 percent increase in Scheduled Castes students enrollment, 41.26 in Schedule Castes, 2.63 percent increase in OBCs students enrollment to Post Graduation in Social Work.

However it seems the level of awareness has been improved and the job opportunities for the Social Work profession might be another reason for more enrollments. The same case could be noticed in the Master's in Social Work course. While the overall trend of rising GER is encouraging, persistent gender and social inequalities in access to higher education are cause for concern. Policymakers must address the underlying causes of these inequalities and implement appropriate measures to ensure that all students, regardless of gender or socioeconomic background, have equal access to higher education.

Table No 5: Enrolment at Ph.D., M.Phil. & Post Graduate Level (including regular and distance Mode) in a Major Discipline/ Subject such as Social Work

Social Work	M.Phil			PhD			Post Graduation (Including Distance mode Students)		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2015-16	248	315	563	314	276	590	25166	22302	47468
2016-17	359	317	676	400	308	708	25501	23042	48543
2017-18	339	302	641	375	292	667	24176	22824	47000
2018-19	345	238	583	160	183	343	22994	25717	48711
2019-20	160	195	355	438	411	849	24600	29115	53715
2020-21	438	411	849	160	195	355	24600	29115	53715
Total	1889	1778	3667	1847	1665	3512	147037	152115	299152
Percent	51.51	48.48	100	52.59	47.40	100	49.15	50.85	100
Increase in/Decrease %	76.61	30.47	50.79	49.05	-29.35	-39.84	-2.25	30.54	13.16

(AISHE, 2021), (AISHE, 2020), (AISHE, 2018), (AISHE, 2019), (AISHE, 2016), (AISHE, 2017).

The above table delineates enrolment at PhD, M.Phil & Post Graduate in major disciplines from 2015 to 2020. A total of 3512 postgraduates in Social Work have joined the Ph.D. programme among them 1847 male candidates and 1665 females. Whereas for the M.Phil programme, 3667 members have joined among them 1889 were males and 1778 were females in India. Across India, the total number of students enrolled on post-graduation in Social Work through regular and distance mode from 2015 to 2020 was 299152 (100%) among them 50.85 percent of them were female and 49.15 percent of them were male candidates. If we compare the 2015 and 2020 trend of increasing and decreasing student enrollment in M.Phil, PhD and Post Graduation in Social Work, Post Graduation in Social Work student enrollment increased by 13.16 percent among them increase in female students enrollment with 30.54 percent and a decrease in male students with -2.25% Whereas PhD candidate enrollment decreased with -39.84 percent among them male enrollment decreased with -49.05 and female with -

29.35. It might be because of not considering an M.Phil. as an eligibility criterion by UGC. There was an increase of 50.79 percent in the enrollment of PhD degrees could be noticed among them 76.61 percent of male enrollment increased whereas 30.47 percent of female enrollment increased. It would be because UGC made mandatory eligibility for teaching professionals in higher education institutions after 2022.

Gender awareness is critical to the entire curriculum of social work theory courses, field work, research projects, individual and group conferences, term papers, and co-curricular activities. Because social work is intricately linked with practise, it promotes affirmative action to undo stereotypes prevalent in society, to instill a solid value framework, and to enable aspiring students to re-examine their values learned since childhood (Anand, 2009).

Social work students undergo field work that exposes them to poverty, lack of basic amenities to poverty groups, discrimination against women and children, and older and other vulnerable groups in the community. The field work enables them to link their theoretical knowledge with the field and learn to practise social work principals and methods in the real world. During field work training, students are encouraged to understand their own socializing patterns, attitudes, behaviours, biases and prejudices, and 'unlearn' stereotypes imbibed during socialization (Mazumdar, 1998).

Reconciliation in social work through planned curriculum and discourse can generate fresh perspectives. Through various opportunities including an orientation programme, field work, individual and group conferences, the term paper assignments and programme media, gender perspectives can be mainstreamed in social work teaching and practice (Gandhi, 2004).

It clearly indicates that female candidates were high in pursuing Social Work in post-graduation in Social Work and PhD programmes in India; it shows Social Work education has come away from the taboo of less enrollment of female students due to fieldwork as part of the Social Work curriculum.

Table No 6: Foreign Students Enrolled on Social Work Education in India

	BSW		MSW	
Programme	Male	Female	Male	Female
(2015-16)	9	16	10	18
(2016-17)	24	22	19	21
(2017-18)	23	28	26	22
(2018-19)	33	53	35	27
(2019-20)	20	26	16	30
(2020-21)	13	20	25	26
Subtotal	122	165	131	144
Total	287		275	

(AISHE, 2021), (AISHE, 2020), (AISHE, 2018), (AISHE, 2019), (AISHE, 2017), (AISHE, 2016).

The above table shows Foreign Students' enrollment in Social Work education in India. In the academic year 2020-21 total of 51 foreign students enrolled in Master of Social Work (Post Graduation in Social Work) among them 26 were females and 25 were males. For the Bachelor in Social Work (Under Graduation in Social Work) total of 33 students were enrolled among them 20 were females and 13 were males. Foreign students' enrollment for Social Work education from 2017 to 2020 is considerably the same but less enrollment compared with other under and post-graduation courses offered in India.

Current Status of Social Work Education in India

Local to global debates and discussions on social issues are centred on bringing about social change. The networking, group dynamics, and lobbying of various institutions assist professional social workers in achieving social work goals. The vision of social work education (SWE) is to produce productive, long-term output for social development, such as modular training programmes for social workers or interventional strategic action plans on social issues (Ranade, 1994). Social scientists and reformers in India explored the historical journey of social work education in India. Evaluatory inferences are drawn about social work education. With critical analysis and explanation, the academic development of social work education has come out of its limitations. The SWOT analysis of the social work profession reinforces its need and scope. After seventy-five years of professional social work in India, internal and external limitations still exist. (Penmetsa K., 2013). Issues and concerns such as HIV, farmer suicides, disaster management, Special Economic Zones and environment-ecosystem degradation are setting new challenges for professional social workers and, at the same time, provide opportunities to create an indigenous model of social work practice (Nadkarni V., 2013).

Field Work Training

UGC review on social work the National Assessment and Accreditation Council’s self-study manual on social work institutions prescribes a minimum of 33% of the aggregate of the total marks to be allotted for field work with at least15 hours per week (NAAC, 2005). It records many constraints from universities, within the school and social welfare agencies for effective implementation of fieldwork programs. Some of the key issues highlighted in the manual are, the inability to increase fieldwork hours due to fixed university norms for other disciplines; non-consideration of weightage for fieldwork in the overall curriculum even though it absorbs 25-50% of the student’s total time and lacunae in documenting experiences and models. In spite of UGC guidance and regulation on fieldwork, the schools in India offer different patterns for organizing fieldwork. Various forms of fieldwork practice are being followed across university-affiliated colleges, autonomous colleges under state universities and central universities. Concurrent field work which emphasises praxis is reoriented into a block form; fieldwork supervision is neither structured nor systematised; twisting hours of work to suit institutional needs, appointing teaching staff without calculating fieldwork in the curriculum and diverting human

resources for other profit-oriented work. Overall, there are no agreed standard guidelines on fieldwork practice and recording among schools of social work in India.

In the recent past, Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) has introduced Social Work Education in distance mode but fieldwork practicum made it mandatory to expose the students to field realities. The social work practicum components in all the programs of study being offered by IGNOU comprise 40 to 50 percent of the total weightage. While NACC and UGC criteria for practicum range from 33 to 40 percent, IGNOU has gone beyond those minimum standards to ensure that the social work programs through Open and Distance Learning (ODL) is well designed and strongly founded to be professional in nature. For each program, separate fieldwork journals have been prepared giving objectives and targets for each year. The practitioners' guide and program guide spell out every detail to help both the student as well as the field supervisor. A professionally qualified supervisor having post-graduation in social work is guiding every student. Perhaps IGNOU is the only university offering Doctoral Programs in social work with compulsory components of field practicum. The school does not admit graduates from other disciplines to its doctoral program, which is otherwise a practice even in central universities located in Delhi. Hundred per cent attendance is mandatory in field practicum for all social work programs of IGNOU (Dash & Botcha, 2018). Whereas other open universities are starting Social Work education at distance mode streamlining fieldwork in distance mode is need of hour, otherwise, it will dilute the real essence of Social Work professional education.

Specialization versus Generic Course Debate

The age-old debate on specialization versus Generic in Social Work Educational Institutions in recent years promoted demand-based specialist courses instead of holistic training and curriculum. To cite the leading schools, the Madras School of Social Work offers more market-based non-social work courses viz M.Sc Counselling Psychology and an M.A in Development Management(MSSW). TISS on the other hand effectively sidelined the founding philosophy by offering two-year thematic courses like M.A social work with children and families; Community Organisation and Development Practice; Criminology and Justice; Dalit and Tribal Studies and Action; Disability Studies and Action; Livelihoods and Entrepreneurship; Mental Health; Public Health; Women-Centred Practice (TISS, 2014).

Personnel Management and Industrial Relations (PMIR) and other specializations

The Factories Act of 1948 mandated labour officers for workers' welfare. This statutory and legal requirement further boosted the demand for a specialized course on Personnel Management Industrial Relations (PMIR) away from labour-centric training. Only in the late 1950s did the Central Social Welfare Board(CSWB) and the Planning Commission of India feel the need for community workers due to the enormity of problems in India. This was much after The Factories Act of 1948 in which rules under the act included social workers as labour welfare officers as early as 1940s. Unlike other specializations, labour welfare training acquired prominence as it became part of the industrial

system with state approval. Due to liberalized economic influence, service-based industries influence in 1990's PMIR completely turned into Human Resources Management (HRM). Hence, the original idea of 'Labour Welfare Centric' has changed into 'Management Centric'; from welfare of workers to managing workers and from 'Labour Officers' to 'Human Resource Officers'. Demand for the separation of PMIR (now HRM) from social work still persists, due to the nature of the work labour officers perform (now Human Resource Officers) and the type of training required, which is different from social work. Academia in India is deeply divided on including PMIR as part of social work since methods of social work were relevant to dealing with labourers (then) and it became obsolete and irrelevant to handle employees (now). Some of the leading schools of social work in India consciously train students in non-PMIR courses. Given all the criticisms it had, PMIR as a specialization is a unique course in social work and it is much more indigenized in India since it advocates workers' welfare (kuLkarni, 1993). The majority of applicants who are first-generation learners prefer this specialisation as it is easy for them to get into the corporate ladder on par with MBA graduates. For social work schools, it is a way of promoting placement for young graduates. Yet, social workers as service professionals have been taught, researched, intervened and discussed insufficiently among the PMIR specialization.

Future of Social Work Education in India

The aim of the National Education Policy 2020 is to increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education in the National Education Policy (NEP). By 2030, the main thrust of this policy in higher education is to end the fragmentation of higher education by transforming higher education institutions into large multidisciplinary universities, colleges, and HEI clusters, each of which will aim to have 3,000 or more students (Para 10.1). By 2030, be at least one large multidisciplinary HEI in or near every district. The aim is to increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education (including vocational education) shall increase from 26.3% (2018) to 50% by 2030. (Para10.7; Government of India, NEP, 2020) (Ministry of Human Resource Development , 2020). At this outset, Social Work education has gained momentum in the NEP-2020 because several times policy documents mentioned school Social Workers, counsellor hence it will create a vast scope of practice of Social Work in schools so our curriculum must be aligned with the requirement in this regard to adopt the NEP-2020 by all states UGC has come up with Learning Outcome Based Curriculum Framework (LOCF) for under and post-graduation in Social Work education in the year 2019 (University Grants Commission, 2019). Furthermore, Corporate Social Responsibility is a newer field that contributes to the development of society's marginalised groups. Those industries that meet CSR criteria are hiring Social Workers to effectively carry out tasks to meet social needs.

Conclusion

Since the aim of Social Work education and practice is to help people help themselves, the contribution of Social Work professionals is essential for achieving *Atmanirbahar Bharat*. The National

Education Policy 2020 has specifically mentioned the appointment of School Social Workers and their roles in sustaining quality education in India, recognising the profession's necessary contribution. It is time to transform Social Work education by implementing school social work specialisation (elective) for imparting extensive knowledge as well as practical exposure to cultivate skills for more effective intervention at the school level. Furthermore, intensive research studies must be initiated in order to develop intervention models for practitioners to practise school social work more effectively.

In this wake, social work professional education has gained momentum; however, there are many issues with regard to a common curriculum across India; to promote a common curriculum, the UGC has released a Learning Outcome Based Curriculum Framework for Social Work Education in 2019 to amplify the effective implementation of NEP-2020. However, all board of studies members of all Social Work Higher Education Institutes across India should place more emphasis on the common curriculum with indigenous fieldwork practice. Furthermore, NGOs and industrial collaborations in curriculum development must be strengthened. Along with School Social Work, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is one of the key areas where Social Work professionals can find ample opportunities, so Social Work education and practice must align with corporate needs.

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