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*Official Newsletter of*

*National Association of Professional Social Workers in India*



**NAPSWI**

National Association of  
Professional Social Workers in India

# THE STUDENT CHRONICLE

## NAPSWI QUARTERLY

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and many more..

# MESSAGE

## PROF. R.P. DWIVEDI



Dear Students,

It is a great pleasure to know that the Students' Forum, under the banner of NPSWI, is publishing its first Social Work Newsletter.

The forum has come out as a dedicated and responsible organisation and has attracted appreciations and accolades from the teachers and students of the social work fraternity owing to the forum's sincere participation during the Social work Congress organised from 28th February to 2nd March this year.

I am sure this new endeavour will add to the repute.

I am hopeful that this newsletter will be received as a great platform for the students of social work discipline throughout the country for the sharing of events, experiences and visions, which is an essential prerequisite for both: the development and evolution of this field and the progress in this field individually.

Wishing my very best to all the students who have contributed and worked hard for the publishing of this newsletter and sincerely hoping for the success of this endeavour.

Dr. R.P. Dwivedi  
President, NPSWI

# MESSAGE

## PROF. SANJAI BHATT



Dear Students,  
Warm Greetings

NAPSWI Student Ambassador programme is one of the recent initiative of NAPSWI. It intends to provide space for their creativity, and to promote their participation. I am so very happy to see the efforts of Student Ambassadors who have come together from different parts of the country and shared their different experiences of experiencing fieldwork amidst COVID-19. This is a small effort to create a repository of articles.

I am so touched to see the efforts made by each of you in maintaining the spirit of fieldwork even during this tough time. This effort leads to creation of indigenous literature and serves as inspiration for social work students, teachers and fraternity.

Thank you for sharing these field work stories and I wish you all the very best in your journey ahead.

Today, the world is celebrating International Family Day. We are passing through a difficult phase as COVID is dodging our efforts . Let's recognise the power of our basic social institution FAMILY. I hope that we will soon win over through collective actions.

Regards,  
Sanjai Bhatt  
15.05.2021

# FROM THE PENS OF STUDENTS' FORUM ORGANISERS

It was an exciting journey while organizing the Students' Forum Events from the scratch under the continuous guidance and trust upon us by Professor Sanjai Bhatt and NAPSWI.

As a part of fieldwork, we all have been taught to document the work and thoughts related to the tasks from day 1 as it defines the growth of the trainee. Both of us tried to document as much we could in the continuous run for making everything work, from planting the seed to seeing the plant grow continuously with immense care.

We were new to the online mode and the free flow of work with the freedom to create anything from the platform of NAPSWI. We tried our best to bring out

Working with the Student Ambassadors from various parts of the country made it even more memorable. The Lot of ambassadors from various parts of the country had stretched our horizons of learning and understanding the nature of our work as professionals.

The events were successful and we would like to thank each one of you professors, professionals and most of all fellow students and learners, as it would not have been possible without your continuous effort and support, especially in these challenging times. You all sat through screens, heard our panellists, interacted with us, emailed us with great suggestions, participated in the events that were first of the kind in our community under the national association.

This newsletter is an initiative by the NAPSWI Student Ambassadors along with the students' forum organizers to showcase the experiences of different social work academicians and students spread across India amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

We hope this initiative will bring out the inclusivity, platform and a reach to a large audience.

**- Abhilasha and Mridul, DSSW**



# In this Newsletter

The idea to bring this issue of the newsletter from the prestigious institution, NPSWI came around with the onset of the Student Ambassadorship program. On the very first day of introduction to the program, Sanjai Bhatt Sir floated the idea of publishing a newsletter from NPSWI which can uphold the efforts of professional social workers, in times of crisis and function as a platform for the Social Work students and professionals. He bestowed the responsibility of collecting stories and experiences to the student ambassadors from different esteemed institutions of India.

As mentioned, from the very beginning, it has been a joint effort and we have received contributions from more than 10 universities and colleges starting from the Central University of Jammu to Mangalore University and many more. We have received a wide array of stories who have worked during the challenging times of the pandemic in 2020. The newsletter shows how inspite of the risks and restrictions involved during COVID times, goodwill prevailed and the young generation had come forward to serve the needy and the destitute. Most of all, we believe, that the newsletter would successfully prove the fact that the young Indians are not only a generation of tech-bound homies but also, workers in the laboratory of the complex organisation called society.

During the e-publication of this issue of the newsletter, we have received support from a number of Student Ambassadors as well as the Students' Forum organizers. We are thankful to all of them for their dedicated time and effort. We are also thankful to Sanjai Bhatt Sir for taking us through this journey.

We hope readers and academicians would enjoy this issue of the NPSWI Quarterly, and enlighten us with their meaningful comments and criticisms.

Thank You.

# NAPSWI Students' Forum

Social Work Students' Forum was organised as part of the 8th Indian Social Work Congress for social work students pursuing a Bachelors/ Masters in social work across Asia-Pacific.

The Students' Forum was specifically formed for and by the students working under the leaders of NAPSWI, and a brainchild of Professor Sanjai Bhatt, immediate Past President NAPSWI, giving them a chance to develop their professional, management, technical and social development skills as professions and individuals by being the planners as well the participants via different events designed specifically for the social work students.

This was the third time, in the Social Work Congress, that the student forum has been organised, and the first time that it is happening with such a number of events, and online within the forum to engage students of social work students spread across the Asia Pacific under the banner of NAPSWI, ICSD Asia Pacific and Visva-Bharati –Department of Social Work Santiniketan. The Students' Forum is growing significantly every year with the constant support and participation of all the stakeholders. The students are unveiling a new prospect of learning and engaging with the Social Work Community with the collective effort.

## Specific Objectives of Students' Forum

- 1.To actively engage the student community
- 2.To educate, guide and motivate, start a discussion amongst the students by providing a platform
- 3.To develop the technical and professional skills in a global pandemic situation
- 4.To promote social work education and the professional content online
- 5.To provide a platform to social work students to discuss and deliberate on the issues related to social cohesion, social responsibility and social work during the changing scenario and delve into the innovative research and practice.
- 6.To strengthen the social work student base and unify them under the same platform

# Student Ambassadorship Program

NAPSWI has also taken steps to strengthen the social work student base by launching the student ambassadorship program for 8th ISWC, for which we received representatives from social work schools across the country.

The induction was conducted online in the fourth week of January 2021. NAPSWI is currently hosting 29 student ambassadors from social work institutes across India through its Student Ambassador Program.

The student ambassadors are currently working on a newsletter on the theme: Social Work Students' Response to the Pandemic and reaching out in an effort to come out with an all-India repository of student initiatives and responses to the COVID-19 pandemic.



# NAPSWI initiatives under Ambassadorship Program in brief:

Throughout the academic year and since the launch of the NAPSWI Ambassadorship program in January.

NAPSWI has conducted many events for the mutual growth of the organisation and students virtually.

1. Orientation program with Prof. Sanjai Bhatt where the aim, vision and agenda of the NAPSWI Ambassadorship program were discussed and Ambassadors got to introduce and familiarise themselves
2. Capacity building session with Prof. Sanjai Bhatt where students were updated about the latest developments in the field of social work and various topics including the Social Work Bill.
3. Exclusive Writing workshop with Dr Venkat Pulla as writing is an important aspect of social work, Ambassadors were given a workshop on how to write effectively through an interactive engagement.
4. Student Congress was an opportunity for Ambassadors to apply their skills both through organisation and participation in the event

# THE FIELD WORK DAY

*-Harish Tamankar*

*(St. Aloysius college (Autonomous) Mangalore)*

The bright sky and new day was new hope to make a great day,  
Went out with my weapons; knowledge and skills to reach out  
to those who are in conflict.

Met the group of young and old, they were so compassionate  
that they could not stop praising.

Suddenly, a harsh voice popped out : "Don't interact with  
them, they might die of infection as they are young and old.

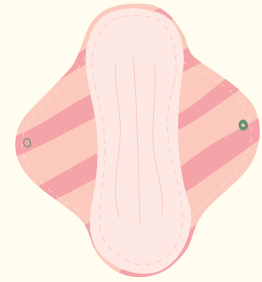
Be wise on your way and take all the precaution and then  
mingle with them maintaining distance.

It's time to be alert and protect the life on earth  
By reaching to those marginalized and vulnerable by making  
them aware of measures to protect their own self and others.  
Let's all live a healthy and wealthy life and make tomorrow  
brighter...



# COVID-19 and Healing efforts in Birbhum

*-Priyonil Paul, Pratibha Ganguly, Mrinal Chakraborty  
Birbhum district*



There are many organizations in Birbhum district of West Bengal that are mainly working with unprivileged sections of the society. During the pandemic, these organizations provided the required assistance to the needy people. Birbhum Upohar Welfare Society is one such organization which has been working during the crisis situation.

The Society, on understanding the plight of women in such times, decided to supply sanitary napkins to the adult women fraternity of Birbhum district. On 13 & 14 June'2020, the Society provided free sanitary napkins to the women who can't afford to buy this at such a time when all nearby supplies were nearing an end. The workers also provided napkins in tribal areas. Menstrual hygiene management practice sessions were provided by the health officials as well.



The Society along with the social workers of Visva Bharati University planned to hold a health camp for differently-abled persons including children. As the persons with disabilities were more vulnerable in this situation, the organization brought some medical officials for checking up on their health and other non-communicable diseases on September 22, 2020. More than 50 differently-abled people were provided free health checkups in the suburbs of Birbhum district.

The Society also organized a blood donation camp on 30th August, 2020 at Ahmadpur. Later, the same programme was held in the entire Birbhum district sequentially. As we all know, there was a prevalence of scarcity of blood at that time. So the organization arranged many blood donation camps to provide blood to the people in need. The blood donation drive was accepted by the public with quite a warm response. People participated voluntarily and thus, the program was a success, indeed.





# Comparative study of Field Work during my Bachelor's



*-Vaishnavi Prem, (BSW Student),  
Tata Institute of Social Sciences*

As a second year student of Bachelors, I couldn't quite experience the pre-pandemic version of the field work intended for us. As of yet, I've done two field works. In both the cases, I was placed under different agencies for a month's worth of internships each time. Although both were internships, they were entirely different experiences as they were in different areas of academics.

My first internship was at an agency called Mitraniketan which was a hub for activities related to rural development. Me and my two classmates worked together in this agency and we got plenty of field experience interacting and coordinating among people. Our goal there was skill assessment of the women within the local SHGs in order to build a common facility center with the machinery that may be of use to them. To do this, we visited their group meetings as well as communicated with the leaders and a few others individually to coordinate. We were able to gather data about the women and also receive information about their perception on what a marketable skill is. They seemed to only consider the skills they were professionally taught even though they possessed many others. Their perception on what a skill should be, seemed very myopic.

My second internship was at an agency called RASTA in Wayanad district of Kerala. The work assigned here was monumentally different from what I was taught in college and what was assigned in the last internship. We were supposed to submit and present a project proposal on climate change. Me and four of my classmates were working together in this internship. We were to create a project proposal on the topic of climate change and multiple ways to reduce it. It was to be inclusive of three levels; community based programs, programs based on different collectives and programs based on the premises of the agency. This took much more effort as it was unfamiliar territory but we tried to collaborate our skills into the topic and included people and community based aspects in our suggestions and action plan. We further had to create another proposal to submit to another firm to collaborate with the agency we worked in to execute the programs within the campus. We further did documentation and related work for them with the tribal populace they worked in.

# IJM (CoAST INDIA PROJECT)

*-Juliyana Manchari (2 MSW CCP), CHRIST  
Bengaluru*

During the course of the pandemic, when the migrant labourers were not being able to travel home, IJM signed an MoU with the Jharkhand Govt to arrange trains and flights to ply. I worked as a student volunteer for this project for two months. This experience sensitised me to many problems, I have never faced. We often didn't have solutions to the harsh conditions that these workers were facing. During that time, we called up the point of contact, enquired basic details such as the number of people stuck, their sustenance, if medical help is required and saw to that, their needs are met by alerting the authorities and the CoAST India field agents.

As weeks went by, I realised my job was not just to ask for details, and as a social worker, I felt responsible for hearing out these people in distress. The migrant workers were under a lot of stress due to the uncertainty, hunger, fear of disease, concern for their family, anger, agitation and feelings beyond that. After collecting their essential details, and after the urgent needs were met, I began to ask them more open ended questions, explained to them how IJM is addressing the issue and gave them time to talk. I tried to do my best to make them feel heard, hoping that once they vented out, they would be restored with the courage and will power required. I conducted follow-up calls until they reached home and was filled with joy when they would video call to show their family or send pictures of them singing and dancing on their train ride back home.

## A story worth sharing:

Rakesh Sahu (name changed) and 15 other young boys were stranded in their place of work, a borewell company. They were left there with no food or money, in a very deserted place, their owner was not traceable. Some boys were very dehydrated and sick, the shelter was a half-built room, exposed to the natural elements. The place outside was flooded and infested. The authorities were informed immediately, they neither knew their proper address, nor were there anyone living around them, but somehow they sent their location through an open Wi-Fi closeby, and were tracked through google maps and rescued within the evening.

This project made me remember why I chose to pursue this profession.

# Helping Hand in the COVID Pandemic

*-Ekata Konar, (Social Science Student)*

*Tata Institute of Social Sciences*

The lockdown was a time when everything was curbed, not only restricting us to our homes but also thrashing us economically. This was a time, different people gathered their surplus resources and utilised it for the benefit of others. A similar thing was executed by me too. I just managed to earn an amount of 1500 in the month of February by teaching a girl of Class 5. I contributed Rs. 100 from there for the purpose of the relief fund.

Again with the guidance of different organizations and mainly the Ramakrishna mission, I took part in food distribution to the poor. Some were in edible form while in certain cases it was raw potato and rice. The irreplaceable smile on the face of an old hunched down lady made me overjoyed, and when I handed over the food packet to her, she murmured something.

Although I failed to understand what she said, still my heart said she gave a small prayer: was it for me, or the organization or for the food, I am not sure but the thought that she can have a full fledged meal made me happy. There was a notorious kid too. He almost snatched the food packets from my hand. For a second, I felt angry. But then I thought that it was just a child's mischief. While distributing the food items, a few photos were clicked. I was happy to pose in the first place but as it got over I got so badly overjoyed that I said not to post my picture on Facebook. As, in the end, I gained something more than a photo to post on different social media.

That was joy and bountiful prayers!



# Diaries from Birbhum

*-Sujoy Ghoshal, Dr. Anupam Gangopadhyay  
Visva-Bharati University*



The pandemic brought on by the deadly Coronavirus brought the term "lockdown" to common people who were unaware of this altogether. Lockdown is not a fancy word for them rather the bitter truth because lockdown brought a lot of hardships and struggles to them. Due to the pandemic situation, many people lost their jobs and hence, the income of a huge number of people became unstable and meagre to sustain their family members. The education system of the poorer section of the children became very worse to deal with. The lifestyle of the people changed suddenly in the flick of a moment.

Birbhum District is one district in the state of West Bengal which came to light in this pandemic circumstance. A huge number of the people living in this district are poor. The overall situation was very dismal and beyond their capacity of endurance. Actually, the tribal people are daily labourers and earn their livelihood through hard work. The people are used to going to work collectively. So the sudden imposition of lockdown brought a huge backlog to their profession. They had to stay at their home without any work, which is very unfortunate.

On such a note, we selected some tribal villages around this district to provide some foods and health-hygiene kits, with the help of Tagore Organizations for Health Awareness and Rural Development, one of the organizations working at ground level in the field of health and rural upliftment. On 10 April'2020, about 300 residents of this tribal village were provided dry ration and masks. The initiative was also joined by a medical officer who informed the community on how to deal with this virus along with imparting awareness on how they could protect themselves from the virus.



On 12 May'2020 the organization recognised the COVID warriors like police, nurses and other health officials at Ahmadpur Sub Police Station and the nearby Health Centre. Their restless effort was given due recognition. Besides this, we also played an active role in fundraising. The collection of the fund was used for the purpose of the vulnerable sections of people. From November to January, we managed to organise some children and aided them in educational and other curricular matters. free of cost. Some of the basic problems that we faced was that many people didn't want to accept any stranger in their community. Besides, a great deal of difficulty was faced while collecting funds. But we didn't lose hope and continued in our stride to work for the marginalised people.

The learning part was very important for us. We learnt how the poorer people deal with the crisis situation in their own ways. Their strong determination not only inspired us, but also gave a nice example in the way they keep distance among themselves by using indigenous methods. Due to the loss of their source of livelihood, they didn't lose their confidence, but were looking for newer opportunities in other fields.



# My experiences with National Hawkers Federation, Kolkata

*-Ashna Ghosh, BSW Student,  
College of Social Work, Nirmala Niketan*



**National Hawker Federation**

I was placed in National Hawkers Federation from 19th November 2020 to 18th December 2020 for this academic year. With the new normal in place, this year's fieldwork was a mixture of online and offline work. Moreover, we were placed in NGOs that are in our home town.

National Hawkers Federations is an association of street vendors across 28 states in the country with around 1188 unions under this canopy. They have been the driving force for various National Policies and Mass movements of hawkers. The ones to remember are National Policy in 2004 and Street Vendors Act 2014. When the mass eviction operation sunshine had happened over 36 unions of Kolkata had come together to fight for their rights and this group named themselves Hawkers Sangram Committee in 1996.

A 'Street Vendor' is defined as a person who offers goods or services for sale to the public in a street without having a permanent built-up structure.' There are three basic categories of street vendors: (a) stationary (b) peripatetic and (c) mobile. In our country street vendors are seen as illegal settlers on the street and people who destroy the beauty of the city. However, in reality, street vendors are providing the urban cities with cheap and affordable goods at accessible places for the urban citizens. They have to still face authorities from the municipal corporation and police each day. Places where the hawker's union is strong, they are able to survive a little easier than places with no unison. One must remember that each citizen in our country has the right to livelihood.

We started our fieldwork by meeting Shaktiman Ghosh, the founder of this NGO or, as he rightly calls it, people's association. We visited Patuli floating market, Gariahat, Hatibagan, Salt Lake sector 5 to interact with the hawkers. We interviewed Hawkers of each of these markets while some issues were similar to each other some characteristics were totally different. They have different leadership, different demography of hawkers also different kind of struggles that each market has faced. While there were more senior citizens and over 50 years of adults in Patuli, a greater number of woman hawkers were seen in Salt Lake sector V.

Women hawkers complained about sanitation not being up to the mark and hawkers in general are waiting for their LOR that they are to get after receiving PM SVANiddhi loan of 10,000 which is a loan offered to street vendors from the centre due to the loss, they faced during Covid 19 lockdown. Hawkers in Kolkata didn't just fight Covid 19 lockdown but they also fought the destruction caused during Amphan cyclone. During lockdown and after Amphan NHF had distributed ration to all the hawkers of these markets, they had opened kitchen services for hawkers who didn't have food to eat. They have visited Sundarbans and distributed ration and relief kits there. They were the first of the NGOs to reach Sundarbans to help the people there.

On 24th November 2020 the rally was organized by NHF with the leadership of Shaktiman Ghosh, it's an annual event that takes place each year. This rally was to remember all the fellow hawkers who lost their lives because of operation sunshine. The rally was from wellington street to the KMC building in Esplanade. All the hawkers that are part of the Hawkers Sangram Committee were all present in wellington street ready to start the rally. They sang slogans against operation sunshine and showed respect towards the hawkers who lost their lives. Hawkers from all over Kolkata were present there to show support and to also plea for their demands. Interviews of different Hawkers associations leaders, woman hawkers and of various street vendors who wanted to voice out their concerns were taken. We walked the rally with them and chanted slogans with them too. We interviewed different leaders and hawkers from various markets there and especially spoke to them about what were the difficulties they faced during lockdown and what is the situation of hawkers who have tested positive for Covid-19.

We were also part of a sit in meeting in front of KMC building in Esplanade where the hawkers were demanding LOR and a redo of the survey and demanding PM SVANidhi loan which is a loan offered to street vendors from the centre due to the loss they faced during Covid 19 lockdown, to be given faster. Various leaders gave speeches there. I wrote a press release of this event for NHF in English. The energy and the speeches of the leaders gave a feeling that cannot be put to words.

This semester's field work was very different and a fruitful experience. Talking to hawkers and getting to know them more, understanding their issues especially due to lockdown and Amphan was something different to experience. I'm glad that I got a chance to associate with and understand National Hawkers Federation and the issues related to hawkers. I have tried my best to gain as much experience and learning possible on field as well as by reading various documents.





## SUSHIKSHA: Rekindling the free mobile school in Covid-19

*-Sanjoli Banerjee, MSW Clinical and Community Practice, CHRIST Bengaluru*

Coronavirus pandemic was a unique time when people all over the world were facing the same problem at the same time. It was also unprecedented since the surviving generations had not seen such a situation before. This brought a halt to most of our daily activities. Besides losing thousands of precious lives and financial losses to people, the biggest disadvantage was for the children globally, especially those from underprivileged backgrounds and in developing and underdeveloped countries who lacked access to technology.



My sister and I work with a similar group of children in rural Haryana where we run the Sushiksha: Empowerment through Education program. This is a mobile school that aims at delivering free holistic education to all, especially girls, Dalits and the poor. However, with the lockdown, we had to shut down the classes. This gave us time to plan more projects, work on our approach and revise our curriculum. Once the lockdown was uplifted, following the safety measures and with the consent of their parents, we reopened.

Upon the declaration of lockdown, we conducted a contactless Corona awareness drive. Thereafter, during the pandemic, we started with telephonic classes and soon, called them in shifts in the physical classroom. Since the 'unlock', we have started awareness sessions, activities like dance, art, drama, sports, etc. plus life skills classes. Along with our NGO, we also launched a 'Skill Development Center' for women to learn stitching and become financially independent. Since September 2020, we have had regular classes, exams and Annual Day rehearsals.

Recently, in February 2021, when the number of cases started falling, we organised our first ever Annual Day 'Aashayein' where we were joined by the villagers, national and international sports champions, doctors, etc. and widely appreciated for the performances put up by our students in dance, oratory and drama. We are now also replicating the model in other villages and have plans to start some technical workshops. The challenge our students had to go through in the pandemic has driven us to launch our Computer Skills Center in the village because one of the biggest divides today among the urban and rural students is the knowledge of and access to technology.

Our students have continued to learn and grow and adapt to the difficult circumstances, with awareness sessions, activity classes like art, dance, drama, sports, self defense, public speaking besides academics.



Although we are proud that we could resume the classes and prevent wasting another few months, yet we believe that technology reach in remote rural areas and equal access to digital mediums for all students could have saved a lot of time and prevented the loss.

# Swachh- A Sanitization Effort

*-Indranil Sarkar & Madhura Chakraborty  
Visva Bharati*

In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, Santi Trust has launched a sensitization program 'Swachh', on basic public hygiene in the month of July 2020 in Bolpur-Santiniketan area. With this initiative, we, at Santi Trust, focused on developing and sensitizing about the practice of sanitization among the public in the post-lockdown phase by providing hand sanitizers and IEC materials to the local street food vendors.

In early 2020, when the whole world was shaken by the outbreak of COVID-19 virus, the global population was reminded about the importance of basic hygiene. In our country, India, it has created a massive havoc because of lower standards of hygiene practices and has exposed the real skeleton of Indian health infrastructure. Due to its grave impact on health and overwhelming transmission, we at Santi Trust, decided to take a step forward and make some intervention in, so that the possible spread in our locality could be slowed down.

Santi Trust has designed the program in such a way as to generate the practice of sanitisation amongst the localites and visitors at Santiniketan. At the implementation phase, Santi Trust provided spray-bottles full of alcohol based sanitizer bought from government-aided SHG (Self Help Group) based out of Suri (District Headquarter of Birbhum) and a IEC material which read 'SANITIZE HANDS BEFORE HAVING FOOD' to the local street food vendors in and around Santiniketan free of cost. In addition to this, we have provided necessary education to the vendors to keep sanitizing their hands with every catering and transaction, and to ask all their customers to mandatorily sanitize their hands before having food and after the transaction. Since, the locality is not well equipped with digital or cashless mode of transactions, the focus was given more to the sanitization of hands. The IEC materials were made to hang on each stalls in good vicinity. To advertise further collaboration opportunities, the IEC materials had phone numbers and email id imprinted. At the implementation phase, we have covered more than 50 street-food vendors around the targeted locality. To run this sustainably, the food vendors were requested to keep the sanitizer bottle filled after each use. To refill the sanitizers, after first use, the vendors were requested to pay a subsidized amount for the same sanitizer or they could also buy it on their own from the local market.



Santi Trust decided to refill the sanitizer bottles at a cost after the implementation phase to inculcate the importance and necessity of this practice amongst the vendors, for which we have received multiple accolades. Since the place Santiniketan, has been a great tourist attraction due to its reachability, culture, nature and history, there has been a great possibility of community transmission through the street food vendors where the visitors and localities have greater possibility to conjunct. So, there has been a necessity of continuous follow up on this program, for which, Santi Trust assigned three volunteers to visit and check up the usages on a weekly basis. These volunteers were also responsible to refill sanitizers and scout further implementation opportunities around the same locality.



# Fieldwork Experience During COVID-19

*-Nikita Soni, MSW*

*Amity University-Noida*

MSW course has an integral component of fieldwork practicum to help students understand the socio-economic, cultural and political milieu and develop capacity for critical examination of causative and maintenance factors of social problems and their consequences. It has been the core of the social work discipline as it contributes to practice situations from fieldwork to classroom discussion to enhance integration of theory to practice and develop professional ethics.

With circumstances being normal prior to Covid-19 pandemic, I was able to make it to Udayan Care, Delhi in the first semester and Swechha-We for Change, Delhi in the second semester for concurrent fieldwork. Since, the COVID-19 Pandemic hit globally in March 2020, the entire definition of normalcy changed. The 'new normal' came with an unprecedented shift in the way of field work practicum and field work modules that have never been designed for having an alternate model of practicum during such global pandemic.

Although, I was halfway through the course, but the block placement is again a crucial component which comprises 45 days of fieldwork at any organization of one's professional interest. Now, electronic means was the only viable option to serve professional interest since lockdown was announced worldwide. But it has been rightly said by Napoleon Hill - "In every adversity lies an opportunity." The entire workforce, organizations were introducing new means and modalities to conduct virtual meetings, trainings and internship programs. Meanwhile, HCL Foundation started off the Clean Noida Green Champions Program, a 4-weeks experiential learning program where participants could gain the knowledge about waste management during COVID-19 pandemic, and collaboratively design awareness campaigns for Noida along with other Clean Noida Green Champions. This provided me an opportunity to interact with waste management experts in a virtual mode and ensured my learning experiences from home. Later, I was also recognized amongst the top 10 Green Champions of Noida. Simultaneously, I was also doing a virtual internship program being laid out by Foundation of Healthcare Technologies Society, Delhi. So, it was considered as my block placement experience. While most of the students were struggling to find online internship opportunities so they were engaged in the research related work. Pre-pandemic, no attempts have ever been made so far to redesign and restructure the field work practicum for the social work students.

But, analysing the global community passing through such turbulent times, the change in the fieldwork pattern was mandatory. With this way came changes resulting into innovative ways and paradigms to bring drastic shifts in our conventional field work practice modules. My University also recommended to explore mechanisms for virtual field work placements, video-based field experiences so as to engage students' in risk-free learning environment. Our faculty Prof. Prashant R Chauhan, facilitated an online platform for students via YouTube channel called "Social Work Times". The students were encouraged to conduct e-activities like webinars with experts from the social sector, engage in e-learning courses, research & literature work, designing an e-campaign, etc to promote their active participation in field work learning.

In the final year, I continued online fieldwork with Swechha-We for Change, Delhi in the third semester and PRADAN, Madhya Pradesh in the fourth semester. Thus, students as learners can learn differently and by different means particularly in electronic means even though they are placed in remote regions of the country. They can learn the tried and tested social work methods in social work with relevant field examples through YouTube or such other electronic means. Such types of uncertainty has become the new order in the society and we must do away with the conventional field work paradigms and patterns in social work. We need to explore mechanisms for virtual field work placements, video-based field experiences, engaging student's in risk-free learning environment in order to promote their active participation in field work learning. Students as learners can learn differently and by different means particularly in electronic means even though they are placed in remote regions of the country. Important and tested field works methods and practices can be taught to them even if they are placed in remote parts of the country electronically. They can learn the tried and tested social work methods in social work with relevant field examples through You tube or such other electronic means. such types of uncertainty has become the new order in the society and we must do away with the conventional field work paradigms and patterns in social work. We need to explore mechanisms for virtual field work placements, video-based field experiences, engaging student's in risk-free learning environment in order to promote their active participation in field work learning. Students as learners can learn differently and by different means particularly in electronic means even though they are placed in remote regions of the country. Important and tested field works methods and practices can be taught to them even if they are placed in remote parts of the country electronically.

Clearly, fieldwork the practicum remains integral to social work education and all efforts to further understand how students learn in this pedagogy will serve to continue to enhance the quality and outcomes of the experience.



# Social Work Students Response To Pandemic

*-Vijayambigai.T*

*MSW CCP, CHRIST Bengaluru*

The global pandemic made my passion strong. I constantly saw the chaos caused by coronavirus and was desperate to do what I could to help. When the lockdown was announced, I was skeptical if the government would be able to reach the entire population. I was, unfortunately, right. Shops were closed in many places and the ones with little savings were struck to buy basic things. I was very disturbed by the entire situation. The one question which constantly ran on my mind was, what do I do now for my people? As a young social worker, when I received a message, asking for volunteers, I instantly completed the application as I want to help people as much as I can during the current situation. I volunteered with the Corporation of Chennai. Since I stay far from the Chennai city, I travelled with all the transports possible to reach the corporation office for my volunteering work. The psychosocial support center- COVID19, was an initiative involving doctors, social workers, Police and other government authorities. As a volunteer, I was able to counsel 1000s of people and address their needs in the time of crises over the peak 3 months of March-April-May. When I entered the place, I could see the faces with masks and hand with gloves. The sanitizer smelled everywhere. I felt energetic when I saw a bunch of people without any hesitation working for the public. I was wearing my mask almost 24\*7 to protect myself and others. Still there were people who worked with me infected by COVID19. I was tested, fortunately, negative and continued my service. My first press meet happened with one of the familiar news channels. They asked "How we attend to critical calls and escalation of emergency cases". That was a huge, the overwhelming response has been sincere gratitude and thanks....I have been getting countless calls. People say: 'I don't know what I would do without your help' and 'Thanks you have brightened up my day'. The responses make it all worthwhile and with the whole team working together it is a privilege to be part of it. The ending was a lovely appreciation certificate for me as a **best psychosocial support volunteer** from the city health officer of Greater Chennai Corporation. This whole experience has made me feel so humble.



# Impact of the Pandemic on Visually Impaired Students

*-Chidrup Setty (BSW Student),  
Tata Institute of Social Sciences*

The pandemic was an unprecedented event which saw devastation not just in the public health aspect, law and order issues, but also extended over the entire corpus of social and economic life. Psychological experts attributed this to social anxiety concomitant with contacting the disease and not even having proper final rituals due to social distancing and health norms. When for the urban privileged, it meant not meeting their friends and attending functions, for the pariahs of economic development (the slums) it meant a battle for life and livelihood.

In India's case, massive reverse urbanisation was observed thereby swelling the fragile structures of the village economy. One such negatively impacted area was that of education. When the economic barriers of unemployment were partly met out by MGNREGA, many families found it difficult to meet their daily needs.

Education was definitely the last thing they wanted to afford. Innovative ideas set forth by social workers and governments in Solapur (paintings of textbooks on walls) and remote villages of Andhra Pradesh (mobile vans to deliver online classes on TV screens) were crucial in meeting the swell in demand for digital education. Despite this, there was a severe shortcoming. The governments failed in acknowledging at least the presence of physically and/ or mentally impaired students in rural India. Raghuvver was one such bright student who was suffering from visual impairment. The student was introduced to me by a lecturer who is also a social worker himself. I contacted my friend circle from an engineering background and started searching extensively for picture to audio software. In my attempt, I contacted several companies and the results were unyielding. Finally, I found a software named hear2read which is currently facing challenges in addressing the issue despite being present from before the pandemic. The Google Lens app was my first priority as I had prior experiences with the application and I tried scanning multiple textbooks and it worked flawlessly. The only problem being here was that one page had to be scanned at a time. This required a person to be present alongside this student whenever he is reading. The issue was thus partly resolved for now and India today still struggles due to the lack of access to Braille books and libraries apart from special attention towards the holistic development of its most challenged during the pandemic times. Addressing such issues require massive cooperation between the civic bodies, civil society particularly the technologically advanced sections of the society and the community of social workers in identifying and addressing the problem areas.

# The Plight of Urban Poor Migrants during COVID-19 Pandemic

*-Asha Rani, MSW Student (AIBAS ),  
Amity University Haryana*

Covid-19 pandemic brought drastic changes in the life of Urban Poor Migrants. There are more residing in the U&V Block, which is an Urban Slum of Shalimar Bagh, North Delhi. The families residing in this slum have migrated either from East Uttar Pradesh or Bihar to earn their livelihood. People residing here mostly work in unorganized sectors such as laborers, street vendors, domestic help, rickshaw pullers, etc. Few of the people work at local factories on low income jobs too.

I have been working in U&V Block for my fieldwork, so I was in a continuous connection with the people of slum through phone calls and online medium, so I got the opportunity to understand the ground zero reality of the slum area during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Problems Faced by Urban Poor Migrants Residing in Slums

- **Loss of Employment and Increasing of Debt:**

The strict lockdown in the country resulted in the loss of employment for a large number of people in every sector, similarly, Urban Poor Migrants lost their employment completely and they had to sit at home. Many of the women reported that they were forced to spend their savings for the necessary day-to-day expenses such as food and groceries, medical expenses, gas cylinder, mobile phone recharges, etc and they had to borrow money from their relatives and money lenders. Rani (name changed), a resident stated that “We spent what little savings we had for eating and we soon ran out of money then I had to request my Mother-in-Law to send me some money. She had to send me a little savings she had but it was not enough so we had to ask for more money from my Brother-in-Law which he borrowed from someone in the village to send us and now we are in debt.”

- **Lack of Food and Ration Supply:**

Even though the government was helping people by providing free rations, who had ration cards, still many of the families in the slum were not receiving ration. Few of the families didn't have ration cards in Delhi, rather than they had ration cards in their villages, so they were unable to get free ration from the government but later on the government made the provision to distribute the ration to those who didn't have ration cards in Delhi by releasing an online form to be filled by the people who had no ration cards to provide them ration but all of the people were not informed about this provision so they ended up not getting any ration.

Few people, those who had filled the form to get the free ration, got the ration with the help of some educated people but many of them were not educated enough to read the messages those were sent to the people to collect their free ration, thus they didn't get the ration. The lack of awareness and information about the rules and provisions to get the ration created a lot of confusion as to how to get the free ration.

The central government also allotted the relief funds of 1.7 Lakh Crore for the poor people, workers, suffering due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Each person who had a "Jan Dhan Account" was supposed to receive an

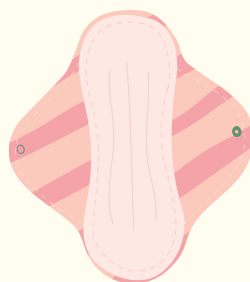
amount of Rs. 1000, which was like a drop of water in contrast to a full bucket of water. Even after this, not everyone in the slum got the amount.



Sarita (name changed), who is the resident of the slum told, "I went to the bank to check the status of my account if I've received the amount or not. The bank personal told me that my account had been deactivated even though I had some money in that account. They told me that it would take time to revive your account. I'm not sure, how this happened?"

- **Inability to use Menstrual Pads and Condoms:**

On asking whether they got menstrual pads and Condoms during the lockdown, it was found out that they were economically broken, so they didn't buy pads and condoms as they considered these as unnecessary expenses. It forced women to use old rugs during the menstruation and inability to buy condoms resulted in unsafe sex. Komal (name changed) explained, "We don't have money to eat properly, then, how can we buy menstrual pads and condoms? It's totally unnecessary in this situation."







- **Families depended on Cooked Food provided by the Anganwadi:**

We had interaction with such people who were completely broken financially and were somehow managing to get the cooked food provided by the nearby Anganwadi one time a day. Kamla (name changed) told, "I was the only person to earn in my family as my husband is no more. I had very little savings which finished very quickly. I had no option to feed my children so we all went to bring cooked food from the Anganwadi, which was being distributed to the poor people. We stood in the long lines, then only we could get some food to eat. We all would have died of hunger if they didn't provide us food."

- **Inability to go back to the Native Places:**

Few of the families shared that they didn't even want to return to their native place. Sarita, who is the resident of the slum explained, "Our native place doesn't have the employment opportunities. The floods are the headache of every year in the rainy season. Our homes get destroyed and our lands are not fertile and are useless, so what will we eat after returning to our village? If we have to die out of hunger, it's better we die here."

- **The constant fear of getting Infected:**

The families had the constant fear of getting infected by COVID-19. Even though they were using masks to protect themselves and following the social distancing but they were still fearful. Pooja, a resident of the slum explained, "I have three children and I try not to let them out of the house, but it's very difficult to make children stay at home. Sometimes they go out and I get worried thinking if any of us got infected, what would happen to us? We will certainly die due to the lack of money for the treatment. People who are rich are dying without treatment and we are poor people. How will we survive?"



Therefore, even though the government tried to help poor people but the execution plan and infrastructure to avail help to the poor was not strong enough and had a lot of loopholes which resulted into the unequal distribution of Ration and relief funds. Many of the families received ration and relief funds and they were satisfied with the help, government provided but those who didn't get any help from the government for any of the reasons, were not satisfied and were forced to lead their lives consuming bare minimum ration and getting other minimum necessities.

# Reshaping Relationships: Field Work Experience Amidst Covid 19

*-Soumyadipta Bose (MSW Student)*

*Visva Bharati, West Bengal*

Social work is about connecting people for orienting them to have better experience in their interaction. But this unanticipated COVID episode and accompanying lockdown have almost deterred people to continue so. As COVID-19 started surging up, but we have left our field work almost undone, the Department of Social Work, Visva-Bharati, where I hail from, took a very befitting decision to have our field work done in our respective home-town. With all the three primary methods, as instructed to apply, I've been immersed myself to emphasise more on the relationship that has been fragmented by COVID itself.

One such experience that I came across was, with reference to blood donation. Covid-19 have changed the definition of connectedness and values in relationships, even at the dire time when Thalassaemia and other patients were running without having any units of blood donated. At that uncertain time people have developed a mindset or sort of phobia, to get infected at any time by stepping out. Though it's no less a wrong fact, but still immersing towards someone's suffering became decreasing, as perceived. To address such a situation, me with my uncle and father initiated a kind of campaign in social media, and used that to post about that miseries of patients in hospitals or in their own homes, surviving due to dearth of blood. It was to attract mass attention and motivate people to come up again with the same spirit, as had earlier, to donate blood in wherever it is, a donation camp or in blood banks. We could make it possible to reorient people to think on the issue. Many people have donated bloods after being inspired by our efforts. To bring people in a connected sphere was our core target and utilizing the resources from it when in confinement.

Other than this, while applying case work method, I advocated for a client by emphasising on need-based approach. As my client, a 13 years old student and her mother, weren't able to redirect their life after the death of the only breadwinner, her father, so my study, followed by diagnosis revealed few questions, like how to strengthen their livelihood? What will be a befitting measure to lift them up? As the situation demanded, to have some amounts of money as early as possible to meet their immediate needs, I just used myself as a medium to reach their voice to a platform to be assisted. I coordinated among the two or three NGOs to help them meet their primary needs of getting books for the girl.



Even the case got assistance by a foreign NGO and their officials made assurance to bring the girl child under their Scholarship Programme to retain her education without any inhibitions. All these could get possible through the conscious use of self, as enshrined one of Social Work tools.

In a nutshell, my experiences regarding the field during such a contagion episode was no longer a difficult one, rather it helped me to adapt newer skills by applying those in the welfare of my clients. I developed a philosophy in myself with regard to relationships among people and how to rearrange it in a desirable order, to address intricate circumstances in societal disequilibrium.





# Remote learning program in COVID-19 times

*-Vidushi Sharma (MSW Student)  
Central university of Jammu*

The pandemic had led to the closure of all the schools in the country. Although the transition for privileged students has been quite smooth, the underprivileged are in a trap, primarily due to lack of the access to internet and unavailability of smartphones leading to low and unequal quality of educational services. So, during this pandemic American India Foundation launched the Remote Learning programme under the Digital Equalizer Programme.

I did 3 months internship as a part of my fieldwork in AIF "Remote learning Programme" in COVID times and 10 students were allotted under me from GUPS Panditwari school, Dehradun and I have conducted diverse activities with the students in innovative way to inculcate reading, writing, communicating, creativity skills among students.



### **CHALLENGES:-**

Engaging students virtually was a big challenge as most of the activities are done better physically but amidst pandemic times we have to adopt online teaching. Some students didn't have access to smartphones as they have feature phones, in that case, I told them to do a conference call and analysed that some students can join those who have smartphones as they live nearby. Also, some days few students come while others are missing, which is mainly due to procrastination, in that case, I tried parental counselling.

Also, I had to call each one of them to tell them about the timings of the class despite sharing links in the WhatsApp group, as this was also a challenge for me how to engage such students virtually in an innovative way. As their parents belong to the unorganised sector, they usually are in the work and only have one phone at home, so some days few students join. Sometimes, poor connectivity was also a challenge from both sides.

### **LEARNINGS:**

Developed technical skills(making of google forms, e-certificate, creative ppt for students). Also developed interpersonal skills and patience during the advent of time. Learned that working in an organization needs unity in hand and motivation on the other hand. Through innovative ways of learning and engaging students through digital equalizers that enhance the skills of both the teachers as well students. Despite challenges, I focused on the solutions and had a good learning experience through a virtual medium, so that it turns out to be a productive and fruitful engagement at the end of the day.

# Social Work Student Response to the Pandemic

*-Sheersha (MSW Student)  
Aligarh Muslim University*

In the month of January, 2020, the first case of COVID 19 reported in India. With time, cases of COVID 19 started increasing and spreading exponentially in the whole world which caused a high death rate and in the month of March, 2020 it was declared as a global pandemic by WHO. To limit the spread of COVID 19 in India, the government declared nationwide lockdown as preventive measures that limit the movement of people around the world. This pandemic has led to prolonged crisis which has affected every aspect of human life from loss of life to livelihood. On the one hand, it forced the world to get shut down in which survival became a major challenge, and on the other, brought us all together where people came forward to support each other. This lockdown has majorly affected the people who were dependent on their daily wages to fulfil their basic needs. In times of crisis, along with the government there were many organizations and individuals who came forward to support people who were struggling to complete their daily needs. As I had an exposure to the social work domain and had interacted with the daily wages' workers and their families during my field visits, I aligned to their struggles, they were facing during the lockdown, and felt the need of immediate intervention. So, to provide the basic aid to those families in Aligarh (UP) and to aware them about COVID19, during lockdown, I along with a non-government organisation, named Rag Dreams' Weavers Association (RDWA) located at Aligarh (UP), a youth-based organisation which work with the street- connected children, initiated a COVID 19 Campaign on 29 March 2020 with the collaboration of local police.



**Ration Kits Distribution**



**Skit to Spread Awareness**



**Community Awareness Camp**

This campaign was focused to reach the street connected families and daily wages workers to ensure their survival during a pandemic. To run this campaign successfully, we generated a fund of two lakh rupees through online platforms. In the process of distributing Ration Kits, first we identified the families who were in immediate need and lacking identification cards at a time of pandemic, which deprived them from getting government services, and prepared the list of people with help of local police. Afterwards, called the families to the distribution camps which were established at police stations of different locations of Aligarh (UP) to distribute the "Ration Kits" to the families while following COVID guidelines. Along with this, we aware them with safety drills to protect themselves and their community from COVID spread. During two months of lockdown. With the regular field of two months, we successfully reached 200 street connected families through this campaign.

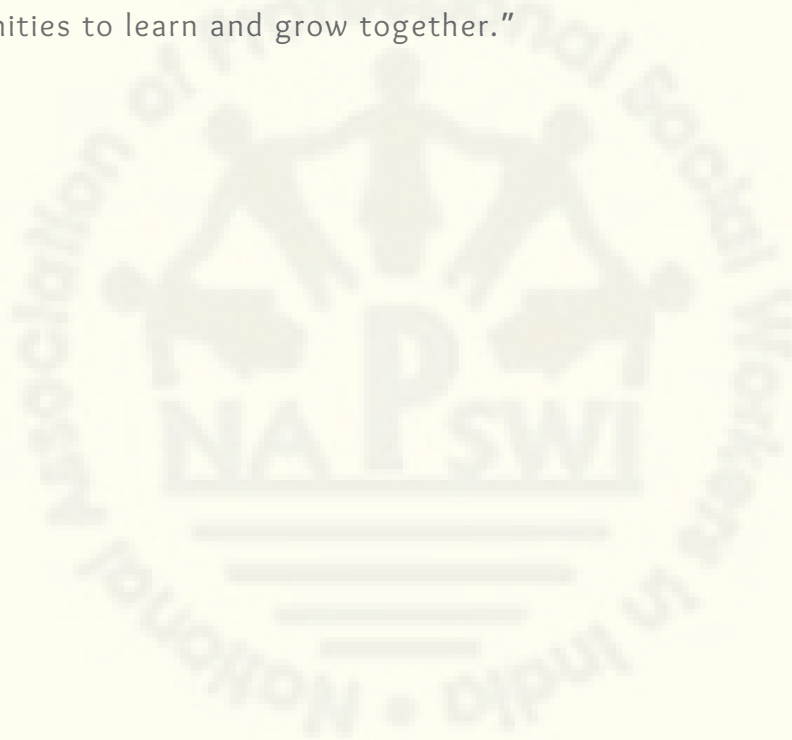
While interacting with the street families during the COVID-19 campaign, we came to know that they had misinformation about COVID as they didn't have the access to information due to lack of resources like mobiles, televisions etc. and lack of information in appropriate manner which they could understand. In COVID time, information was a powerful tool to keep oneself safe but this misinformation led them to the negligence of preventive measures. As the Unlock phase started in India, people started returning to their work which led to the threat of COVID spread. Considering all of these factors, we understood the need of providing COVID information to street children to keep them safe. Ration Kits Distribution Then, I along with the team of youth of RDWA initiated COVID 19 and Street-Connected Children Project in August 2020 which aimed at providing COVID information to street-connected children to protect them and their community. In this project, through regular community visits, we provided COVID resources to the children and made them aware about coronavirus, how it spread, the need of taking precautions, what safety measures need to be taken, how the measures could prevent spread of virus and protect oneself etc. We delivered the information to the children in a child-centric manner i.e., through videos, dance, skits, charts, activities etc. so that they could understand and implement it in their daily engagements. While engaging with the children, we noticed that they were taking precautions at the time of interaction with us, but not in their community. In understanding the actual situation, we realised that, in their community, a few people were taking safety measures which were being followed by the children as well, that could have put them at high risk of getting infected.



So, with the permission of local authorities of Aligarh, we along with a few children established “COVID Awareness Camps” in their community on alternate days to spread awareness of COVID and to provide safety resources.

Through this project, in four months, we not only made children and their community informed about COVID but also found out how misinformation could put lives at risk. While spreading awareness of COVID, I got the insights that people had their own mindsets and it was difficult to change only through words of mouth.

At that time, creative activities like skits, visuals, videos etc helped us to make them understand and forced them to change their mindset. Working in this pandemic was an amazing experience for me and has made me believe that “Crisis brings opportunities to learn and grow together.”



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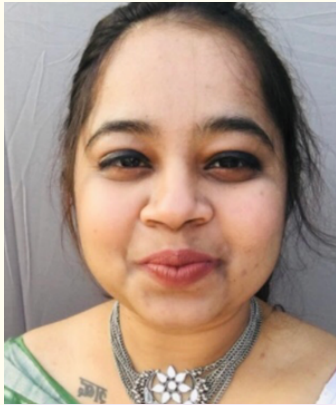


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Call for papers for Issue 2: Email us at [npswimail2020@gmail.com](mailto:npswimail2020@gmail.com) with your abstracts on the following themes by 15th July 2021:

- Social Work in Globalised World
- Digital Social Work
- Social Work and Good Governance

## Indian Definition of Social Work:

Professional social work is based on democratic values, humanitarian philosophy with central focus on the human relationships and human dignity. In India, the profession of social work draws its strengths from indigenous wisdom, constitutional commitment for equality, social justice and human rights, and scientific knowledge base. Its professional practice contributes to macro level understanding and policy change while continuing to focus on people at individual, group and the community levels. As a practice-based profession its interactions enrich institutions and systems at all levels through culturally responsive interventions that aim at individual and social wellbeing. Its central concerns are empowerment of vulnerable, oppressed, and marginalised sections of our communities and as a practice it endeavours to partake in social change, sustainable development through participatory and collaborative processes with people in need, institutions and the state.

- NAPSWI, 6th Indian Social Work Congress, 2018, Delhi

## Global Definition of the Social Work Profession

Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing. The above definition may be amplified at national and/or regional levels.

International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW)

International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW)



# The Pledge

I pledge to step out of my area of comfort so I may meet people, listen to their lives, grow and remain open to their full humanity

I pledge to be critical and ask questions in order to cast doubt, inquire and prompt social change and transformation.

I shall self-reflect to examine my own biases, clarify my beliefs and take stances.

I shall strive continuously to advance knowledge about people, issues, and social work profession.

I pledge to contribute towards turning our institutions into genuinely transparent, accountable and fair communities of action.

I promise to defend freedom of expression, to being open always to dialogue and listening.

I shall be consciously inclusive towards all people and act to promote diversity, equality, mutual respect, justice and reconciliation.

I give a promise to walk with marginalized voiceless, and people who have been forced to silence.

I promise to myself to engage people and structures to address life challenges and enhance their wellbeing.

From this day I am aware that I am part of a community of change agents. I, thus, pledge to act ethically, in compassion, with thoughtfulness, conviction, passion, honesty, perseverance and humility.

That is the least I pledge for.....

(Adopted by NAPSWI @ 1st Indian Social Work Congress 2013)