



DSSW Alumni Newsletter

Feb 2021



MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT

I congratulate the Alumni Association for bringing out this newsletter. It will further strengthen the ties between our alumni and the Department. This initiative also coincides with the platinum jubilee which we are celebrating this year in 2021. Together, let us strive to maintain the glory of this premier institution of Social Work.

Pamela Singla
Head of the Department of Social Work
Delhi University



Department of Social Work

DSSW ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

Department of Social Work, University of Delhi made us who we are today. Any opportunity to engage with our alma mater is a matter of pride. With utmost happiness, we bring to you the first issue of an e-newsletter. We are even more proud as the newsletter is being launched in 2021- the platinum jubilee year of our premier institution.

- *Activities of the Department*
- *Initiatives taken by the alumni association*
- *Work being done by the alumni as professional social workers*
- *Insights about larger issues related to social work*

Each issue will have one over-riding theme to introduce the work of our alumni. The theme for the first issue is social enterprise. We present three case studies in this edition. Many of our alumni are contributing significantly to the social work sector. We bring some insights gained by them in their respective fields.

To begin with, we are aiming for a bi annual publication. The success of this e-newsletter, like any other publication, depends on our readers and contributors. We welcome your feedback and more importantly support to create a network among the alumni of DSSW. The first edition of the e-newsletter is dedicated to the memory of two of our great teachers whom we lost recently. We are happy to share that Prof Sushma Batra has sponsored the publication of this edition. It is great encouragement for us. We invite all our alumni to help us make this space a vibrant platform for exchange of ideas and information.

Anjana Anand (Editor)
(Batch 1992-94)

Message from the Alumni Association

The alumni association was formed in 2020 under the leadership of Prof. Neera Agnimitra with the broad objective of supporting the Department of Social Work to scale even greater heights and create a platform for exchange of knowledge and experiences among the alumni and between the alumni and students. A working group has been formed to set it rolling while the registration formalities get completed. It is hoped that this will further strengthen the ties between the alumni and the Department; and among the alumni so that they can seek each other's support to grow professionally and also share their experiences with the students.

Niraj Seth

1980-82 Batch
(On behalf of the Alumni
Working Committee)

Activities at the Department



The Department of Social Work – popularly known as Delhi School of Social Work (DSSW) celebrates its 75 years of existence this year. Isn't that incredible !! A visit to the 'School' fills one with nostalgia where one has spent many joyful and anxious moments; developed lifelong friendships and acquired a foundation to make us what we are today. The Department has also come a long way in deepening its roots, spreading its wings and maintaining its excellence as an institution. Somewhere in this journey most alumni lose touch with the alma mater once they get involved with their respective careers. Yet, the ties remain as strong as ever. One only has to provide an opportunity.



Their eagerness to engage with the Department is palpable. It was so evident in the Alumni Meet that was organised in February 2020. It was attended by 85 alumni across batches as early as 1953 to as recent as 2019. Most of the alumni present have been very successful professionally but they became students once again while sitting in the classroom where they were given a welcome. The students of the Department worked hard to make them feel at home and presented a short cultural programme and encouraged them to share about the pranks they played as students, which they happily shared.

A Tribute to Prof R.R. Singh and Prof. K.K. Mukhopadhyay



The year 2020 will always be recalled and remembered in the history of the department of Social work (DSSW) not only because of the spread of the deadly pandemic Corona but also because we lost two of our eminent teachers- Professor R.R. Singh and Professor K.K. Mukhopadhyay within a brief span of 5 days. Prof. R.R. Singh bid adieu to his friends, family and students in the early hours of November 10, 2020 after fighting against Corona relentlessly. He will always be remembered as an epitome of knowledge not just by his colleagues and students but also the entire fraternity of Social Work Profession. He was born in a simple and modest family at Kashi Vidyapeeth. He was a self-made person, a highly accomplished teacher who could reach the top because of his consistent hard work and self-disciplined attitude. He never lost any opportunity of learning from his seniors, contemporaries as well as juniors. We all witnessed in his initial days in the department: dictionaries and newspapers were his close associates for acquiring command over language. The success of his endeavors was evident when Prof. Murli Desai in her tribute to Prof. Singh acknowledged that

she needed to seek help of dictionary/google while trying to find answers to meaning of some words used by him in his write-ups.

He worshipped work till the end of his life and was constantly engaged in various academic pursuits. He did not forget to cancel his last appointment before he was shifted to the hospital. He continued to lead a simple life in spite of heading one of the best institutes of social work in India. He was also known to exhibit the attribute of punctuality in all scheduled meetings. He was always seen reaching much before time occupying seat in the first row and taking notes in his writing pad all through the conference and was known to participate actively in all the sessions till the very end. He never shirked arguments with colleagues or students till he could put forth his view-points based on evidence.

We shall all remember him as a revered teacher and guru with an iconic personality who has been a role model for one and all.



The department lost another teacher-Professor K.K. Mukhopadhyay on November 12, 2020 because of the after effects of Corona. He passed out from our own department in early 70's and even found his soulmate there –a junior, Ms. Sutapa. He had the distinction of being one of the initial few scholars who did doctorate from the same department. He also completed post-doctoral programme and joined the department as a permanent faculty. He never had any hang ups about himself and intermingled with his colleagues and students alike. He always remained cool. No one ever remembers him losing his temper even once.

Prof Mukhopadhyay had the distinction of heading the department twice for a period of three years each time. He was one of the most liked head of his time since no one feared entering his room at any time. He was always available and was ready to lend a listening ear to all type of problems of his colleagues and employees.

He believed in team work and had the ability to work together towards a common vision for the betterment of the department. His ability to be appreciative of the small efforts of colleagues always kept the colleagues motivated. No wonder a lot was achieved during his tenure as HoD! The Department also celebrated its golden jubilee during his headship. I was the convenor and I vividly remember him standing with us in the middle of night after the 3-days' celebrations was over and guests had left. He came near us and very softly remarked- '*Susma sab Shesh kar diya tumne-Thank you*' meaning the programme was complete because of our efforts. Such was the simplicity of this great man who stood behind us like a rock all through these three days. He had another remarkable distinction of encouraging all his colleagues to get registered for doctoral programme in our own department. The credit to open up Ph.D and encouraging all of us resulted in having more than 400 research scholars complete their Ph.D from Department of Social work.

He was a very popular teacher in the class room and was popularly called 'Mukho Sir' by all of them. He will be remembered as a true Gandhian who not only wore Khadi but followed the principles of Gandhiji in true sense. His life was only simplicity and honesty. Sadly enough the most painful good byes are the ones that can never be explained in words especially to the teachers who have given the best years of their lives selflessly in sharing the highest gift of knowledge with the naïve students and are instrumental in transforming the lives of one and all.

Good teachers never die. They always walk with their students though unseen and unheard by anyone as they continue to be the role models of their students and colleagues who shared the stage with them once upon a time.

With Utmost Regards
Professor Sushma Batra
(Batch 1973-75)

Activities undertaken by the Alumni Association

As a first step a website was created as a curtain raiser for the activities of the Department and achievements of the alumni <http://www.dsswalumni.com>. The website provides an opportunity to the alumni to register themselves and become members of the Association. We look forward to more alumni becoming members of the Association to create greater synergy.

Lecture Series

Lecture series have been initiated for the students wherein the alumni will have an interactive session with the students. Two such lectures have been organised so far. First one by Dr. Niraj Seth in which she spoke about her experiential journey while working in various settings, challenges faced and contributions made. In the Second Alumni Lecture, where Ms. Kiran Bhatia, one of the Founding members of Sanjeevani and with several years of experience of working with the UN organisations, spoke at a webinar on the mental health Implications of COVID-19. We intend to organise similar lectures for the students, so that they can gain from the experience of the alumni who have worked/are working as professionals, activists and social change makers.



Alumni Lecture on Implications of COVID-19 Ms. Kiran Bhatia | Batch of M.A. 1975

Ms. Kiran is a social worker and development professional with forty years international experience. She has worked extensively on gender equality and social inclusion, women's and children's rights and protection from violence and harmful practices with voluntary organisations, governments and international agencies largely in the Asia Pacific region.

Logo Launch & Document Release

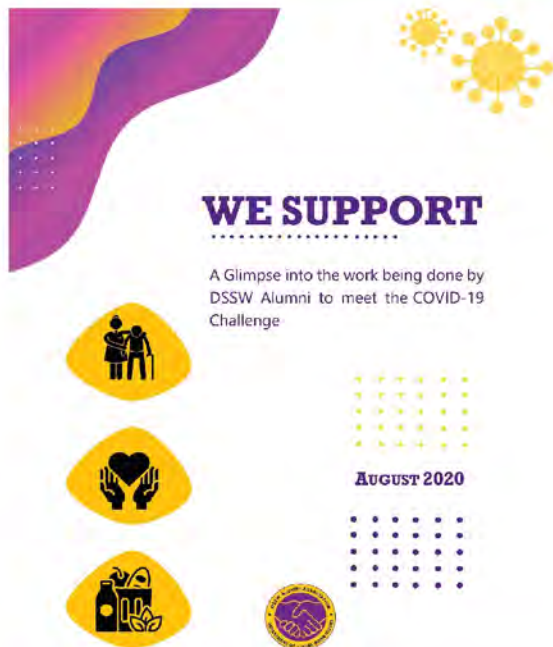
The Delhi School of Social Work (DSSW) is completing 75 years in pursuit of social work theory and professional development. We are happy to launch a logo celebrating 75 years of committed existence in solidarity with people.

The Alumni Association and DSSW jointly release 'WE SUPPORT' document that includes more than 30 case studies of alumni working to address challenges arising out of COVID-19.



Documentation of interventions by the alumni to meet the COVID challenge

By - Sonia Singla, (Batch 2016-18)



The COVID pandemic in 2020 spread across countries at an unexpected rate and almost brought the whole world to a halt. Besides being a medical enigma, Covid-19 in many ways has become a human tragedy impacting lives of many economically and socially. It created a situation where we saw loss of lives, loss of jobs and employment, deep insecurity, mental health issues and impact across different aspects of human life. However, this situation has also brought out an unprecedented will to reach out to support those in need. Many individuals came forward to do whatever they could to provide relief to those impacted by the spread of COVID-19. These also included our alumni. Therefore, the Association of DSSW Alumni felt that it is imperative to acknowledge the efforts made by our alumni during these unprecedented times.

The DSSW AA team rolled out a detailed questionnaire to gather details of experiences and contributions made by the alumni. Different means of communications: Emails, SMSs, Whatsapp Messages, Personal networking were used to reach out to as many alumni as possible. We received individual stories, which helped us to present more than 30 case studies - not only across various states within India but from other countries too. The document helped us understand how the alumni were participating in relief work, the innovations they brought and the challenges they faced while carrying out the activity. The WE document was launched on August 14, 2020.

The document is available on the DSSWAA website: <http://www.dsswalumni.com/>.

Meet our alumni

In addition to organising activities within the Department, the Association will also create a platform for the alumni to know more about each other and find opportunities for networking – so important in today's time. In the first edition we bring to you brief but inspiring stories of three of our alumni who have initiated start-ups in such varied areas – Consulting, NGO and Social Enterprise.



Students' capacity building

Sumit Chaudhuri, MSW Final Year Student (Member of the Placement Cell)

The Alumni Association in collaboration with the Placement Cell of DSSW organised a session on 'CV making techniques' for which alumnus Mr Sumit Chaudhuri (MD and Chairperson of Third Millennium Business resource associates) from 1980 batch imparted essential skills and tips for drafting a professional CV. During the session, he guided students to imagine one's own existence from the viewpoint of the other people. He shared the idea to use reverse psychology and to keep oneself at the position of the recruiter while drafting the application and to mention the skills which should benefit the job description.

At the same time, he also suggested to mention only those skills in which the candidate is actually well-versed to avoid any false position. He emphasised that the resume should reflect some unique selling point and the impressive career story of the candidate. In the two hours session, he gave many tips to the students not just for designing a good CV but also for presenting oneself in the best possible manner to ensure a smooth transit from Campus to Career. The session certainly helped students the students in refining their CVs/Resumes. The Alumni Association and Placement Cell of DSSW is fostering partnerships so as to bring more such sessions that would facilitate students to ace their career goals. We intend to reach out to more alumni and gain from their experience.

Environment Social and Governance Consulting

By - Umang Pathak (Batch :2001-2003)



www.linkedin.com/in/umangpathak03

I set up my own not-for-profit organisation, Sivanaa to focus on advocating for human rights including citizen's Right to Information (RTI). Sivanaa was associated with Parivartan, an organisation founded by current Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to use Delhi RTI Act to ensure implementation of public schemes and also campaigning for a central legislation in association with National Campaign of People's Right to Information (NCPRI). Alongside, I also worked with Mr. Prashant Bhushan, a senior advocate and public interest litigator. Simultaneously, I graduated law to use as a tool as human rights lawyer. I worked in the chamber of Mr. Prashant Bhushan on public interest matters, advising people campaigns on filing RTI applications under the Right to Information Act, 2005, representation before Central Information Commission and in appeals before Delhi High Court. During this time, I also taught Social Legislation and Social Security, to the students pursuing their Masters in Social Work at my alma mater.

The core values, ethics, integrity and learnings especially about social justice and social change as inculcated during MSW at DSSW, have guided me both in my personal and professional life. This is the reason why even as a corporate lawyer working with top law firms in the country (Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas, AZB & Partners and Desai & Diwanji) I focused on ethics, anti-bribery, anti-corruption, corporate governance and sustainable business advisory (ESG – Environment, Social and Governance). This has also guided me to focus on the central role that businesses need to play for achieving sustainable development goals. In furtherance to my belief that for a sustainable world, we need sustainable business and sustainable leadership I recently founded ESG Advisory Services to focus on reformation, transformation and action of leadership and governance and advising Indian (private and public) and multinational companies, foundations, trusts, NGOs and their leadership though their journeys towards sustainability.

Janman People's Foundation

Shourya Roy (Batch : 2015-17)



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JANMAN PEOPLE'S FOUNDATION is a developmental organisation working towards bridging inequality and establishing inclusiveness. We envision an inclusive society based on the idea of social justice and democracy and work to fight against the oppression of the marginalised. Registered as a section 8 company, the organisation was founded by the alumni of Department of Social Work and Kirorimal College, University of Delhi. As a young organisation we intend to provide a common platform to the youth and young professionals who have the passion to give back to the society. JANMAN's main domain of work revolves at the intersection of Education, Health, Environment Disaster Relief and Enhancing Public Participation in Governance. Our formal work as a youth collective began in 2019 when our team initiated an awareness campaign in Muzzafarpur, Bihar regarding Chamki Bukhar which had claimed lives of more than 300 children.

Since the first phase of the nationwide lockdown imposed due to the growing cases of COVID-19 we started a covid relief service across 10 states with the help and support of our alumni network. From providing dry ration to more than 3 lakhs individual to provide milk and glucose biscuits to pregnant women and infants we have managed to continue our relief work in 2021. In collaboration with many organisations our team at Delhi volunteered and coordinated in sending 8000 stranded migrants to their villages in UP, Bihar and Bengal. Our relief services in total had eight different projects including a helpline number to give counselling to those who needed at the time of the lockdown.

This monsoon season when lakhs of people of Bihar and Assam were battling floods our team initiated "Project Saahil" to provide relief in 14 districts of Bihar and two districts of Assam. As of now we are still volunteering in rehabilitation work for flood affected families in Bihar. In 2021 we are starting our dedicated project on Menstrual Hygiene and on community engagement in educational governance in rural Bihar and Delhi.

Social Enterprise Banasree Sustainable

Preeta Choudhuri Ghoshal (Batch 2011-13):



preeta.dtpl@gmail.com

In India, the social taboo of associating shame and the notion of pollution to menstrual blood has been instrumental in distancing women from the concept of sanitary hygiene. It is common knowledge in the rural and semi urban community, that women do not invest in either underwear or sanitary napkins to manage their periods. The National Family Health Survey reported in 2015 that only 48.2 percent of rural women aged 15- 24 years used hygienic methods of protection during their menstrual period. Other studies revealed that while in most rural areas, menstrual cloth is used to manage periods, unsafe absorbents such as sand and ash are also common.

Banasree Sustainable was founded in 2019 as a for-profit organisation working to improve access to safe & sustainable sanitary-wear for women in urban and rural India with the vision:

An equitable world with a positive social attitude towards women's sanitary hygiene. For women, the underwear is not only an essential need of human dignity but also linked to menstruation. It helps women reconnect more positively with their bodies, their cycles and also each other. Our model aims to make women regain autonomy as a process and a means to emancipate themselves through a collective fight against age-old barriers.

The idea was conceptualised in 2018. I had been working in the social development sector for a decade. During my field travels across rural and remote parts of India, I noticed the barriers and gaps in the sanitation and menstrual health sector. Post my marriage, I was exposed to my family's garment manufacturing & export business and noticed the amount of wastage of premium quality fabrics produced by the industry. I decided to use the dead-stock fabrics & start a domestic brand of underwear with a hybrid business model. My business idea was selected in IIM Bangalore's Women's Start-up Programme in early 2018 where I received training in a boot camp with 100 other women from all over India.

The commercial brand – Wear Equal, was launched in August 2019 in the market with part of the profits channelised to provide a cross-subsidised product targeted for low-income markets in rural India. Our Work 'Banasree', in Bengali language means 'The lady of the forest'. We are a women-led organisation drawing our roots from intersectional feminism. What makes us different from other fast fashion brands is that we are driven, not only by social, but also environment-consciousness! All products are made from 100% up-cycled organic cotton fabrics sourced from export houses in Kolkata, thereby reducing dead-stock going to landfills and also providing affordable yet sustainable products in the market. Additionally, the products are packed in environment-friendly cotton pouches that can be re-used over and over again!

Reflection on the Social Issues

(This Article was written by Dr. Arpan Tulsyan (Batch 2004-06) for The Times of India January 21, 2021)



There have been several attempts in the past to provide equitable and inclusive education in schools. Despite these attempts, there is ample evidence to demonstrate that gender inequality still exists. While measures like provision of incentives for girls, creation of gender equity fund are steps in the right direction, but are these enough to bring about the desired results? Or does it require a more fundamental change in the mindset? Arpan Tulsyan explores this aspect in her article.

Even when textbooks preach gender equality, the hidden curriculum at schools can still undermine girls

As we celebrate the International Education Day on 24th January, this year's theme reflects our collective global challenge to 'recover and revitalize education for the COVID-19 generation'. The pandemic has disrupted the education sector across the world and more so in countries like ours, already marked with stark inequalities and digital divide.

However, the silver lining is that we, as a nation value quality in education more than before. We increasingly realise that education is not just about delivering lessons or filling worksheets, but perhaps more about teacher-student interactions, peer interplay and an experience of school life which supports development of a range of skills, competencies and attitudes. There is also a growing realisation that widening inequalities mandate newer strategies to bridge the gap between quality of education delivered to learners from diverse backgrounds.

The pandemic period witnessed much awaited New Education Policy, followed by an announcement of developing two new National Curriculum Frameworks for Teacher Education (NCFTE) and school education (NCFSE) by 2022 in India. As we reopen schools facing challenges amplified by the pandemic and seek to revise these two key documents, it is an opportune time to reflect on the need to revitalise education through curricula.

Ordinarily, curriculum is understood as a set of prescribed knowledge, guiding teaching and learning experiences in schools, often used synonymously with 'syllabus'. However, educational thinkers have argued for a much broader understanding. From the idea of curriculum as fixed, prescribed and subject-centered, the discourse needs to shift to a more fluid, interactive and child-centered notion. The focus needs to be on the outcome- what is learned- rather than on what is directly taught. In other words, the processes of transmission of content in classrooms needs to be examined. This process is often highly contextual, and fraught with diverse tacit, indirect and often unintentional messages and cues which have been referred to as 'hidden curriculum'. Although hidden curriculum remains unacknowledged and under-examined in India, it creates a powerful context of learning, shaping students' self-perceptions and worldview.

For instance, while observing a class, I found the teacher listing 'girl' as the opposite of 'boy' on the blackboard, accompanied by a short monologue on how they are as different as night and day. While these words fall under the masculine-feminine (ling badlo) section, the teacher unwittingly decided that they are opposites (vilom shabd). In another class discussing teamwork, a teacher listed hero, heroine and 'item girl' as members of a film making crew.

My classroom observations at Delhi schools showed that both male and female teachers initiated twice the number of interactions with boys than girls, which included verbal interactions like encouragement and discussion of higher order questions. These also included non-verbal interactions like giving more time to answer a question, nodding towards them, looking at their side while teaching and walking more between boys' side of the row in the segregated class and so on. Only high performing girls were found to interact with the teacher, at par with boys. Conduct-related interactions, however, were made nearly twice with girls even when boys disrupted the class more often. Verbally, teachers discouraged girls by making frequent references to girls' predicament of marriage, housework and child-rearing; and non-verbally through gaze aversion and frequent interruptions. Hence, through an unequal division of their time, attention and energies as well as their interpretation and illustration of the textbook content, teachers were often found to subvert the formal curricular goal of achieving gender equality through education.



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In a scenario of already aggravating inequalities, curriculum reforms must move beyond approaching quality and equity through the lens of representation alone. It is crucial that hidden curriculum is acknowledged as a vital area of curriculum design and educational assessment impacting both academic outcomes and social-emotional competencies. New curriculum frameworks should examine the cultural, ideological and political underpinnings of hidden curriculum and its manifestations in schools' organisation and structure, unwritten norms and classroom practices. Lastly, they should seek to reorient this powerful force to support, rather than subvert progressive educational goals through continuous teacher training and school monitoring programmes.

Both NCFTE and NCFSE must articulate and account for the presence of hidden curriculum particularly with reference to marginalised social groups in diverse educational settings and teaching areas. It will pave the way for India furthering a formal 'equal right to education' into a much more substantive 'right to equal education'.

*"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."
Helen Keller.*

MEMBERSHIP DETAILS

The more we are, the better we can be with our combined strength. We invite our seniors, juniors and contemporaries to make this alumni association of our alma mater even stronger. We have tried to make the process simple. Please visit the website <https://www.dsswalumni.com> and register yourself by clicking on the Membership tab. Before registering, kindly make the payment as per the Payment Details below and note the transaction id (or UTR number) as you would need to mention it in the registration form to confirm your payment.

Life Member (INR 2,000)

Associate Member (INR 1,000)

Student Member (INR 500)

PAYMENT DETAILS

Payment to be made in the name of 'Delhi School of Social Work Society'

Account Number: 0991000100488446

IFSC Code: PUNB0099100

We look forward to your feedback on dssw.alumni@gmail.com
Website: <http://www.dsswalumni.com/>



Thank you!