



DSSW Newsletter

February 2022



Editorial Note



Anjana Anand (Editor)
(Batch 1992-94)

As the world moves forward with the changing facets of pandemic, we bring you another issue of the alumni newsletter. Despite the Department conducting online classes with very limited face to face interactions, we have forged ahead and carried out some joint programmes which is further strengthening our association. With registration process of the Association complete, we can now focus on expanding our membership. Currently we have 76 members who have registered with the Association. We hope to increase our outreach with the alumni so that we are able to network more effectively. I would appeal to everyone to please help us create a comprehensive database.

This particular issue highlights the work of our distinguished alumni across borders. Mr. Subrat De provides insights about the challenges faced while working with the vulnerable communities in Afghanistan. Ms. Vandana Thapar shares her journey with NIPCCD and how she responded to the emerging need and was instrumental in developing a course in child-counselling. It is our endeavour to highlight issues related to social work that are in discourse. In our previous issues we have written about social stock exchange, school social work. In this issue Umang Pathak writes about 'Environment, Social and Governance' (ESG) which is an emerging area in the development sector.

Thank you for your contributions. We look forward to your feedback to make this newsletter even more informative and interesting.

Special Message

Dear DSSW Alumnus,

Our Institute, the DSSW, is one of the premier institutions in the field of Social Work education. We are fortunate to have large number of distinguished alumni who have made notable contributions in different fields. The Alumni Association has taken an initiative to create a database of our alumni since the year of inception. Starting from 1948, about 5000 students would have graduated in the last 75 years. A small number when compared with larger educational institutions, which have robust Alumni Associations we have the advantage of being a close-knit group. Though small in number, together we can make a difference. Many of us have retired or have branched out to other fields but at heart we all have a great affinity with our Institute. To promote this bond, we would still like to remain in touch with you.

We intend to develop a comprehensive data base of our Alumni will help us connect with each other – across batches, across geographies. It will help us to

- stay in touch with our Alumni and keep them posted on activities relating to DSSW
- help build a strong thought process which will keep DSSW in the top institutions imparting Social Work education and build a community
- support the DSSW placement cell place the students in organisations
- contribute in building and developing infrastructure both educational and structural

Towards the above, we have planned project DSSW Outreach through which we are collating some basic information about our alumni to know where they are and provide opportunities for them to connect with each other and with the Department. Please help us reach a larger audience through your contacts within your circle/batchmates and request them to fill in the Google Form so that we can build this comprehensive data base.

docs.google.com/forms/d/1smX5oDzNjeuACGLgdeEbZf7gi_ZHoYoYbzo6S0_Z8Rg/edit

Thanking You

Jayant Jhanb (Batch : 1975-77)

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“ Coming together is a beginning.
Keeping together is progress.
Working together is success „
Henry Ford

We invite our seniors, juniors and contemporaries to make this alumni association of our alma mater even stronger. Each one of us are making a difference and have a story to share. Register here to join us and share with us your marvellous change maker stories of social work.

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/>

Activities at the Department

This was a very significant year for the Department when it celebrated its Platinum Jubilee and centenary celebrations of Prof MS Gore. Even though the students were not coming to the Department, a series of lectures were organised by the Department – online or in a blended mode.

Platinum Jubilee Lecture Series

The first Lecture under the Platinum Jubilee Lecture Series was organised on 14th December 2021. Professor Lena Dominelli, University of Stirling, United Kingdom delivered the lecture on the theme 'Climate Justice and Ante-Oppressive Social Work for the 21st Century'. It was attended by more than 150 participants. The speaker deliberated on the social and the ecological aspects as inseparables and spoke on re-defining the role of social work within an integrated socio-ecological debate.

Webinars

The Department jointly organised a webinar titled, "Livelihood and Rehabilitation in India's North-East" on 28th April 2021 in collaboration with Centre for North East Studies and Policy Research, Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi. The lectures were delivered by renowned speakers Prof. Walter Fernandes (Director of Northeastern Social Research Centre) and Prof. Virginus Xaxa (visiting Professor at Institute of Human Development, New Delhi). Another Webinar was organised on 12th March 2021 on "Capturing the Contribution of Women in India's Freedom Movement". The talk was delivered by eminent educationist Dr. Bijaylaxmi Nanda, Principal, Miranda House, University of Delhi.

Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav and Birth Centenary Celebration of Prof. M.S Gore

The Department with the rest of the country celebrates 75th Year of India's Independence 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' with the Flag hoisting ceremony on the eve of 15th August 2021 in the premises of the Department. An event was organised to commemorate the Birth Centenary Celebration of Prof. M.S Gore. It began with the release of the flyer. Prof. Gore was the first principal of Department of Social Work (popularly known as the Delhi School of Social Work). The Head of Department Prof. Singla and Professor Sanjai Bhatt shared anecdotes on the life of Prof. Gore during the event.

A seminar was organized on the 'Life and Works of Prof. M.S.Gore (1921-2010): Theme, Issues and Critical Debates' on 9th September 2021. The speakers of the seminar were Prof. Shalini Deshpande (Director, TISS, Mumbai), Prof. Satish Deshpande (Professor, Dept of Sociology, Delhi School of Economics), Prof. Sanjai Bhatt (Professor, Department of Social Work, University of Delhi) and Prof. Manoj Kumar Jha (MP and Professor Department of Social Work). The seminar was chaired by Prof. Pamela Singla. Prof Aruna Bhardwaj also shared her experiences with Prof Gore. The seminar was attended by more than 100 participants.

The M.S.Gore Memorial Lecture on 19th November, 2021. The keynote address was delivered by Prof. N. Jayaram, Professor (Retd. Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai). He delivered the lecture on the topic, '**Blending Sociology and Social Work: An Overview of M. S. Gore's Writings**'. The Lecture was much applauded and had a presence of 150 participants.

Research Colloquium. Prof. Satish Deshpande, University of Delhi delivered a talk titled "Distancing the Social: The Social Sciences in Times of Pandemic" on 10th July 2021.

Alumni Lecture

The Alumni of the Department continues to be the hallmark of the institution. The Delhi School of Social Work Alumni Association collaborates with the Department and jointly organises many academic activities. The Alumni lecture series is one such event. Like every year, the Alumni Association organised a lecture in the memory of Prof. M. S. Gore on Friday, 8th October 2021. Ms. Brinda Singh, our treasured Alumna delivered the lecture on the occasion. The topic of the lecture was '**Fieldwork - the essence of Professional social Work**'.

Constitution Day Celebration

The Department celebrated Constitution Day to commemorate the adoption of the Constitution of India on 26th November 2021. As part of the event, the preamble of the Indian Constitution was read out by students and scholars and teaching and non-teaching staffs of the department. The Head of the Department, Faculty members and students shared their views on the significance of the day and reiterated the need of promoting constitutional values in both our professional and personal lives.

Planting Trees

This was facilitated by a senior alumnus Ms. Laxmi Menon and her organisation Satsang Foundation Delhi and My Tree Team. Ten plants of various kinds were planted in various places of the Department and hostel lawns.

Augmentation of Department Infrastructure

A multi-purpose seminar room equipped with latest technology has been set up in the Department . It has a hi-tech audio system, LCD TV, projector and other multi-media devices. With most of the academic activities shifted to online and virtual platform, the augmentation of the multi-purpose seminar room turns out to be a boon for the Department. Many events such as webinars, research colloquium, lecture series, M.Phil/ PhD viva for admission have been organised in the newly inaugurated seminar room. All the classrooms have been equipped with new equipment, smart board, projector, podiums etc..

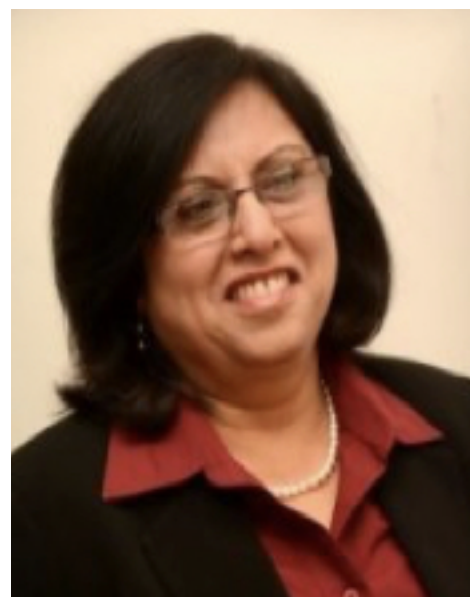


Joint Activities by the Department and Alumni Association

Interaction with the students by Indu Wadhwa

Many of you will know that the Department has included in its curriculum imparting knowledge and skills that go beyond academics. An hour every week is dedicated towards this end through a period 'support activities'. The faculty has been inviting experts to take sessions. The Alumni Association has begun to support the Department through some of our eminent alumni with years of experience. Ms. Indu Wadhwa who has spent many years in HR and conducting trainings took two sessions with the students in November 2021. The session was organised online following the protocol. It was attended by about 70 students and faculty members.

"It was indeed a pleasure to have an interaction with the students as a guest speaker. My experience of conducting trainings for students for more than a decade, tells me that education starts from knowledge of own self, and all management starts with self-management." **Indu Wadhwa**



She conducted the two sessions on the topics - Life and career planning and CV development and interview preparation. Indu mentions that she has seen students of higher studies grappling with anxiety about their future. Many of them are grappling with questions related to their aspirations; vision for life; how to differentiate oneself in a crowd; how to establish meaningful, tangible, personal goals and many such issues for which there are no easy answers.

"The newspapers have reported repeatedly that 80 % of the students coming out of educational institutions are not employable". To enhance the employability, she suggests a number of topics which could be covered during the two years period, along with PG course contents. Some areas highlighted by her are - Confidence building, Understanding the power of your mind, Grooming and business ethics, Communication skills and body language, Dealing with fears and setbacks, Positive attitude and work ethics, Self-management and internal locus of control, Interpersonal relations, Work and time management, Ambition, Career planning, Grooming and workplace etiquette etc..

We hope to organise more sessions and workshops for the students.

Landscape Project at the Department Crowdfunding for landscaping of the Department

The Alumni Association along with the Garden Committee of the Department undertook landscaping of the campus. It started as a response to a remark made by Prof Aruna Bhardwaj during the Annual Day celebration when she reminisced how she along with other faculty members worked with the maalis (gardeners) to make the campus look vibrant, full of flowers and healthy plants. The Department has taken several initiatives in the past such as creation of a herbal garden, planting roses, cleanliness drives with help from students. The alumni wanted to make their contribution too. Through crowd funding the Association was able to raise 80,400/- in cash. The batch of 1993 contributed four benches in the memory of their batch-mate Juno Srivastava who lost his life in a terrorist attack in Sri Lanka. We thank our alumni who contributed in cash and kind and made this project successful.

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|----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Abhijeet Hazarika | 8. Rajeev Verma |
| 2. Bindu Vohra | 9. Rita Raina |
| 3. Indu Wadhwa | 10. Radhika Gulati |
| 4. KK Seth | 11. Subrat De |
| 5. Niraj Seth | 12. Versha Bedi |
| 6. Poornima Nanda | 13. Yogesh Chandra |
| 7. Pramod Gupta | |

The amount so collected has been used towards purchase of gardening equipment, flower pots and saplings, training of maalis by horticulturist Mr Mahesh Misha. A visit to a farm house near Gurgaon was also undertaken as an exposure visit for the maalis. They have already started doing organic composting at the campus. The amount raised was also used to repair and paint the gardening room. The final round of landscaping will be undertaken in a few weeks' time. We are also thankful to Ms Seema Malhotra and Ms Suman Pawah for their guidance and support.



We hope to wrap up this activity by developing a charter for gardening along with the garden committee members. This charter will serve as guidelines for future initiatives in gardening and landscaping. The Department partnered with its alumni for uplifting the lawns of the Department. A series of activities were held in this regard.

ESG and Social Work

I remember my time as a social work student at Delhi School of Social Work, starting way back in 2001. I vividly remember that our curriculum and our convictions were rooted in socialism. The conventional idea was that it is the State/ Government's responsibility to provide socio-economic welfare to all sections of the society and protect the natural environment. Hence, we the prospective change-makers of the society looked at the governments and the government institutions, created under legislations or welfare schemes, to execute our ideas about social change. For instance, healthcare system of the country, mental health institutions, social legislation and social security, shelter homes for poor, children homes under juvenile justice framework, enforcement of welfare schemes for poor (urban or rural), women and children etc.

That was also part of the same era of shareholder capitalism though corporate social responsibility as a concept existed historically and informally yet not statutorily as it does today. Shareholder capitalism was the theory devised by Noble Laureate Milton Friedman's in 1970s that "the sole purpose of business is to maximize profits for its shareholders". This theory formed the basis for the industrial and economic growth the world over. The focus on maximizing profit and hence maximizing return on investments to the shareholders and investors drove businesses to engage in legitimate and even illegitimate means such as indiscriminate use of natural and even human resources having damaging effect on the people and the planet. This has resulted in diminishing public trust in corporations and businesses.

On the other hand, businesses also drive economic growth, generate employment and create new and innovative products to solve world problems e.g. electric cars, air purifiers, renewable energies, technological solutions for food production, reducing carbon footprints, etc. But businesses do not exist in isolation. Therefore, the role businesses especially in today's globally integrated and connected world, when corporate economies have outgrown national economies? As per one research of the top 100 revenue-generating entities in the world, 71 are corporations. In simple words, many corporations' revenues are more than the revenues of many countries. For instance, India is at number 29 and revenues of many companies such as Walmart, Exxon Mobile, Apple, Toyota Motors are more than India.



Source: <https://oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/of-the-worlds-top-100-economic-entities-29-are-states-71-are-corporates/>

Therefore, the economic theories and also the expectations from the businesses are continuously evolving and also shaping the international instruments and domestic legislations. Broadly, in industry terminology, it is termed as sustainable business and the metric devised for evaluating the sustainability of businesses is termed as ESG, which stands for 'Environment, Social and Governance'. Typically, these factors are industry/ sector-specific and include factors ranging from as a climate change, energy and natural resources consumption, human capital and labour management, board quality, corporate governance, gender diversity, privacy and data security, among others.

ESG as a term was first mentioned in the United Nation's Principles of Responsible Investment (UNPRI) – a global network of investors constituted in 2006 that attempts to integrate ESG practices into investment practices. Alongside the institutional investors, the banking community, capital markets are also focusing of ESG performance of companies.

Considering the fact that social work professionals' primary objective is to work for social change they can play important role to play especially in context of 'S' or ESG whether by working directly with communities or indirectly through organizations, government / public, voluntary, domestic or global, or private sector etc. The world is in the race against time to create make the world sustainable and the pivotal role that businesses have a to play is well understood and accepted. Hence, the social workers as a professional community must also understand the global movement termed ESG and play its pivotal role in the race to sustainability along with the other sustainability professionals.

Umang Pathak (Batch 1999-2001)

Meet our alumni



Addressing the challenges in Afghanistan

After passing out from DSSW, in 1993, I worked in various levels, from community organisation, to emergency response, to research, to advocacy, to programme management, to team coordination etc. I am currently leading the operation of Christian Aid in Afghanistan, as Country Director. Important constituencies included marginalized groups like Internally Displaced Persons, ethnic minorities, excluded/ discriminated communities, refugees etc.. One of my interest areas is to bring together, people with different skills and resources, to enhance their capacity as well as learn from them.

Afghanistan as we all know is going through political turmoil and civil war since late nineteen seventies. Various regimes came and brought new patterns of misery for people, especially for women and children. Last twenty years of so-called democratic regime could bring back hope for justice, human-right, peace and inclusion. Change of power since mid-august this year has again brought back feudal models of governance along with unprecedented suffering and uncertainty.

End of 4-decade long war, as propagated by international community, could not stop the suffering of the Afghan people; rather brought back, hunger and destitution, which poised to kill more Afghans than all the bombs and bullets of the past two decades. The country is on the edge of complete collapse. The UN has warned that Afghanistan is fast becoming the world's worst humanitarian disaster. A dangerous combination of worst drought, displacement, insecurity, rising food prices and a malfunctional banking system have led to a devastating food crisis. Harsh winter made already dire situation to absolute unbearable for many, especially the millions of displaced aged, women, and children. In addition to the conflict, Afghans have been struggling with the COVID-19 pandemic, which has left many residents in a state of economic instability. 14 million people, including two million children, was estimated as food insecure during August/ September. Today the situation has changed. Afghanistan requires the largest humanitarian support ever, to reach the 24 million people in need of lifesaving assistance.

Like many other international humanitarian support organisation, Christian Aid has upscaled response activities. Based on various assessments and experiences of community groups we have expedited response around food insecurity, malnutrition, shelter and winterisation, as well as livelihood creation. These supports are coupled with other needs such as WASH, Protection, and awareness generation on COVID compliance. We are covering around thirty thousand households in 6 provinces of Western, Northern, and Eastern Afghanistan.

It is a real desperate situation. Pictures of bone-thin children circulated in various reports and media prompt gasps of horror. Anybody walking in the streets of Kabul or Herat or for that matter any other city can see lines of endless households/ tents with destitute men and burqa covered women, empty eyes of hungry children and the anguished faces of desperate parents.

Economic sanctions were supposed to punish de-facto authorities who stormed into power in complete undemocratic manner. But such measures are actually freezing millions of people across Afghanistan, pushing them away from the basics support systems they need to survive.

None of the regimes of the last forty years have been able to achieve long-lasting stability, peace, and independence from external actors. But the level of despondency prevailing today throughout the country is something unbelievable. Afghan people need backing from all parts of the globe to save hapless people from realities, that is something not created by them.

**Subrat De, Country Director, Christian Aid, Afghanistan
Batch – 1991-1993**

My Journey of Developing Advanced Diploma in Child Guidance and Counselling



In the year 1983 I got a breakthrough to work in a Child Guidance Centre at the National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development. As a Young Professional, on one hand it gave me a sea of opportunity to work with children with behavior and learning problems together with multidisciplinary team of part time professionals, on the other hand, it provided a gateway to integrate these experiences into the Training programs of the Institute.

At that time, in the absence of protocols of assessment and counselling, it was a struggle to reach at the parent in 'front of me' to develop their understanding about the issue before them and together work out the way forward for actualization of the potential of their child. The Training in Social Work was my greatest strength as it enabled me to imbibe the merits of 'coordinated team work' and 'client's right to self-determination', all of which reflected in service delivery mechanisms that were child friendly with a focus to empower the parents and children.



Moreover, the Institute's focus on training obligated me to break free from the boundaries of limited one-on-one clinical interventions to transfer skills of early detection and tertiary level interventions to upper and middle level functionaries working with children and adolescents in various settings such as ICDS, schools, Children's Institution etc. All these invaluable interactions enabled me to move beyond the 'clinical approach' to embrace the paradigm of integrating mental health services at the vantage points where children were available.

As we embarked into the 21st century in the year 2001, the counselling services for children in the country were still conspicuous by their very absence and there were many emerging challenges in form of children afflicted by natural and manmade disasters, victims of trafficking; sexual abuse and early initiation of sexual activities and increased dependence substance and drugs. Meanwhile at the Institute we developed many training modules for different target groups. Later, on demand we developed relatively long duration training programs for teachers and childcare functionaries to develop attitudes and skills to address needs emotional wellbeing of children. However, despite the efforts, the impact of these trainings was rather limited. These experiences brought in the recognition, that counselling required breaking away from advising and judgmental mode of communication and a constant ongoing supervision to do the same. Also, critical mass of well-trained mental health professionals to work in the area of child and adolescent counselling were simply not available.

To address this gap, the idea of developing a professional course on counselling children was born, at the time when the Institute too was in the process of restructuring its activities.

It is planned based on 'Developmental', 'Ecological' and 'Rights' perspective to facilitate the learners plan and undertake mental health activities in different contexts viz. Preschools and Schools, Children Institutions and adoption centers, community settings, clinics and hospitals etc. Course was launched in the year 2005-06 on experimental basis, later affiliated to Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University in the year 2009-10 and was recognized by Rehabilitation Council of India in the year 2012-13.

The greatest strength of the Course till date is the experiential and action learning methodologies that focuses on intensive skill training & personal growth opportunities to develop and practice skills of assessing and planning individual interventions for children with different psychopathologies, of conducting developmental and therapeutic group interventions with children & adolescents and for designing need based & milieu specific mental health programmes in schools & communities. Self-Development Workshops spread over the entire year are designed with the aim to provide a platform for the student to take journey of self for greater awareness, personal growth and reflective thinking to develop a positive attitude for oneself and towards others. Fieldwork in clinics, schools and children institutions is expected to integrate theoretical experience with practice and acquire hands on experiences. Personal and professional growth of the student is supported through an intensive process of clinical supervision that is undertaken individually as also in small groups.

The Institute is now running the Course for the last 16 years and more than 300 professionally trained counsellors have emerged as champions dedicated to the cause of counselling reaching out to children and families in different settings. Leaving behind this legacy, as I superannuated from the Institute, was my greatest source of fulfilment, knowing that hundreds of children and their families will be benefitted for times to come by the well trained young ambassadors who will take the cause of counselling forward into the future.

Vandana Thapar (Batch : 82)

Joint Director (Child Development) - Retired

Visit to Munsiri

We planned to organise a trip for the alumni and their partners, to Munsiri in October, 2021. It began with a group of six members but got reduced to four. The main reason being that it takes about 10 days to visit the place located in district Pithoragarh in Uttarakhand. Those engaged in jobs find it difficult to spare so many days. Besides, people were still reeling under the impact of COVID and not sure of the possibility of a tour. So, four of us decided to go ahead. The roads were bad although it was quite sometime after the monsoons. We were told that an airport is likely to come up in the district which will facilitate travel.

An additional attraction for the visit to Munsiri that two of our alumni Malika Viridi and Theophilus are based there and are doing some wonderful work including running home-stays with local people. These home-stays have been featured extensively in several publications and cited as good examples of sustainable livelihoods. The idea of combining pleasure trip with an interaction with our alumni seemed very tempting. Needless to say, the beauty of Munsiri cannot be described in words. One has to visit the place to experience it. It is so pristine and beautiful. Kanwar and Rajendra went on a two-day trek to Khalia-top while his wife and I explored the town and went for walks and experienced the waterfalls all around.



Meeting with Malika and Theo was indeed a treat. We listened to their inspiring story of how they decided to settle down in Munsiri and how they have empowered the local women and other groups. It was hilarious to hear from our host at the home stay as to how women used to hide in their houses whenever they saw Malika coming towards their house because she would come to invite them for meetings. From that stage to the present one where their members work easily on laptops and at the ground level hundreds of women gather whenever required at a short notice.

The curriculum of the course was built through a rigorous and scientific process by conducting a market survey to assess the need for specialized training for counsellors to work in the area of child mental health; peer review of a draft curriculum and firming it up with a small group of experts in a workshop. The Outcome was one-year full time Advanced Diploma in Child Guidance and Counselling for students with post graduate degree in Social Work or Psychology or Child Development or Education. The vision was to create professional and personal growth opportunities for those working with children and child related systems so as to enable children to actualize their potential.

They have formed a women's collective called Maati through which most of the development work is carried out. We were told that women decided to join Maati when they took on the influential owners of illegal liquor shops. Domestic violence was very common due to unchecked alcoholism encouraged by these shops. This struck a cord with both men and women and they joined hands although they had to face long legal battles with the owners of the liquor shops. They have stayed together since then.

The home-stays and local treks are organised by Malika and Theo through a separate entity called Him Prakriti who work with and through village level institutions. Visitors from other states and countries have stayed in these homes and given excellent feedback. Malika has become a farmer and sells the produce along with other women farmers. She is also the Van-Sarpanch and is very well respected among locals. Theo, on the other hand works with shepherds. At the time of our visit, he had gone to the mountains to install cameras to spot snow leopards. He met us briefly but gave us some lovely coffee..



Life is quite tough there. Going through COVID times was even tougher because they had to close their home-stays for several months impacting their income. Living conditions are difficult and these become worse because of weather conditions. We got a glimpse of it when we had to stay indoors for three days because it was raining non-stop. All means of communication and electricity were cut off. Solar lamps were our only saviours. We had to delay our return by two days because roads had been damaged due to landslides. Such experiences are very humbling and make one realize the immense power of nature. While returning we wondered whether the place really needed so many tourists which is likely if the airport comes up.

Kanwar and Niraj Seth
(1977 and 1982 batches respectively)

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

Thank you!