



Dr. S D Gokhale

Interviewer: Prof. Anjali Monteiro

Camera/Sound: Prof. KP Jayasankar

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Dr. S. D. Gokhale is Trustee and President Emeritus, Community Aid Sponsorship Programme. He did his Dip.SSA from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Bombay, in 1949 and earned his Doctorate from Varanasi University (Banaras). He was awarded a Fellowship by the United Nations in 1959-60. Professor, author, researcher, editor and administrator, Dr Gokhale is currently a member of various UN, Government and University Committees. A distinguished social scientist, he is a known name both nationally and internationally. A recipient of the International Gandhi Award (1998) for outstanding work in the field of leprosy, he was selected 'Patron' for the International Year of the Family by the U.N.



47:36 onwards.

The OGV file starts from here.

7:26 When Pandit Nehru said that you are a senior person why should you touch my feet and you are Indians so why should you beg the government, give us ration, give us a tent and all that. its is your country and you should get it as a matter of right, so that really taught us many things in group work and community organization and all that without calling it so. We were asked once to escort a train also to Lahore. it was a very bad experience. People who were there when the train started were not alive when it reached. But, you know, that training to us dealing with refugees, dealing with the social problems of this magnitude seeing millions of people moving on a road. BD KULKARNI was with me at that stage but he was a government of India employee at that stage. But, after that experience we came back to Bombay and Kumarappa had an idea of extending our course because we had spent time at Kurukshetra. . Originally our course was a guinea pig batch as we called it.

We were known as the guinea pig batch because that was the batch that was given two years training and six month for research. now since we had lost so many months, KUMARAPPA had a good idea of extending the course by six more months. So it would become three years. So we were angry with all this. So we said look here Dr. Kumarappa, we are not going to stay here for six more months. Whatever classes you want to take you can take in the morning evening night we don't mind. We want our examinations taken and we are going to part, otherwise we are going on a strike. So that was the first batch which threatened the institute to go on strike, but Kumarappa was nice he said I understand your difficulties you have come from different places so we will arrange for you training etc. that was the experience I had, with the guinea pig



batch. And, because we were together in Delhi and the fieldwork in Solapur where we did the study on prohibition . Then we did some studies in Bombay and Pune on slums, so because of working together my class, my seniors, my juniors it became a very closed knit group. We are very close friends and we are still very close friends because of this particular situation.

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Now having done my training, and in my training we had professors who were very good like DR Behram Mehta. Outstanding man who taught us sociology. Kamala Bhuta was teaching psychology. Murthy who taught us on labor welfare and Gauri Rani Bannerji never taught us but she had just joined, but we had excellent professors and excellent methods of teaching and what I thought was after our course was over, the institute did help us to get into jobs, but that thing remains on my mind, even when we did the review of Tata Institute, that we had to re orient our training to suit the Indian needs. We cannot just depend on case work, group work, community organization etc we had to find the Indian way of teaching.

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So. while I returned to Pune where I belong, there was a department of social welfare here and the director of that department came to my house because they had heard about me, I used to write, I used to give lectures and all that. He said Sharad why don't you join the department. I said ok because it was in Pune itself, but he said I have no position to offer you. I will only offer you a position of an auditor. So if you want to join as an auditor of the department join. I said I don't know audit. he said



you think about it. Then I thought why don't we do the social audit of the department. So he appointed me as the [person in charge of social audit of the welfare programmes of the department. But one advantage I had in this government experience of Government was, in those days there was only four or five trained people. One was M.N. JOShi who died. Appa Belawadi, myself Dr. D.V. Kulkarni and one more. So whatever new came to the department came to us whether we like d it or not . So when we started the movement of starting remand homes in various districts, that was a charge given to me.

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Then we decided to have a beggars act and applied to Bombay. ok you go there and be the first superintendent of that beggars home. Then the first home on leprosy, you go and take charge of it. Then there was this suppression of immoral traffic act, so you take up that work. The great advantage I had was, planning, training, because the department developed a training institute there. The four of us had a tremendous benefit. Because everything that was started by the government came to our lot and we were supposed to implement it. We learnt very much. So unlike one small experience in Tata Institute and then going into again, a small field this was a big advantage to us so we had a broader perception, . schedule caste, schedule tribe, tribal welfare, bhangi mukti, child welfare, women's welfare, separation of immoral traffic, rehabilitation everything we had to do. The advantage was, that because of the small group of four or five people we had to study everything.

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so no work that we undertook whether it was probation or rehabilitation.. it was a habit Tata Institute gave us that you must study the programme first understand the science behind it, understand the philosophy behind it then only plan for it. That is the way I worked. When I went to Bombay, that was my first major assignment the develop the programme of Prevention of Beggary. It was a very interesting but difficult situation because in that institution in Chembur I had almost 2500 beggars arrested, and out of them the majority were disabled and lepers. I learnt a lot in that experience. There used to be disabled people in my institution, the court released them. The court never paid any serious attention to their cases. yeh andha hai chod do.

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One day I was going g to metro with my wife for a film. So I saw this sighted boy begging outside the cinema. So I quietly went, he was closing his eyes and pretending to be blind. So I put my hand on his shoulder and said Vasu what are you doing here? He said sir please don't talk loudly I am pretending to be a blind beggar. but then fortunately we were able to develop rehabilitation centres for them. Infact that Thane-Mankhurd road was built by about 3000 beggars.

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We had another experience on the street one day I say a beggar with a big python around his neck. He said if you want to arrest me you can arrest me but I will put this python around your neck I said if that python is not going to trouble you why is it going to trouble me? I am not a sinner. So he put the python around my neck. We



arrested that person took him to the beggars home. I didn't know where to keep that because that is court property. I took it to my residence. And what to feed him? Jamadar said give him some eggs, so we gave him some boiled eggs. Next morning my wife told me, either you or this python. Both can't stay in the same house. So next morning I took the python and went to the court . The question was where will we keep him? I said we will keep him at that government centre which used to produce medicines. So we gave it to him. So like this, we had a number of good experiences. We learnt through the experiences.

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When the first person died in my institution, he was old I was so touched as if someone from my family has died. Later on it became a routine I had to write a letter and paste it on his chest and send it to the Coroner's court. DAVIS ws an English lady who used to work in the department and teach us when working with child welfare. I asked Davis I felt very touched on the first death now I don't feel so. What Davis told me was if you lose your sensitivity to human issues, you have no right to be the superintendent of this institution you better quit. You have to maintain your sensitivity throughout. These are some of the lessons I learnt.

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After the beggars thing I was dealing with disabled children because there were lot of disabled children and I was wondering what to do with them. How to rehabilitate them. Then I studied more on rehabilitation. I was with the All India Institute of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. India medicine and rehab in Worli. There was



one girl who had lost both her legs in a train accident. So we took her to the institute and she was there. As luck would have it MOTHER THERESA came there and I showed her around from Sweden, from Norway, from America and all. DR SANT was the director, he was with me and this girl was in a room and MOTHER said can I go talk to her. I said yes. She went and sat on the cot of that girl held her hand How are you and this and that? We were in the directors office having coffee. I said Mother what do you think I am very impressed with the equipments you have got from America and Sweden and all that for rehab, but I wonder if you have anybody in your staff who can go sit with that girl and ask her, “How are you?” unless there is this person to person contact is there, all this equipment is useless. It is kind of a rich island in a sea of poverty. We appointed social workers after that..

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Another interesting experience I had here was, one day the police commissioner phoned me to say that...We have transsexuals and they are creating a lot of trouble and we are going to have guest and all that so the commissioner was asked to remove all of them. Suddenly the next evening I had 600 transsexuals on my hands. I did not know what to do. In our practice we remove their clothes and give them shirt and pant and this and that. These transvestites came to my room and started saying that we will go naked but we will not wear shirts and shorts. I said anyway you have to do it. We will shave your heads and all that which we did. Then the next morning I said to my jamadar who is the chief of our security give them a drill, let them parade they should be walking like a man. After four days jamadar comes and says I want to so on leave I can't teach these fellows. matak matak ke chalte hai How can I teach them?



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Very fortunately we got a lady from WHO. Her name was Anny Price, she was a psychiatrist. She came to my rescue she examined all these people and certified that all these people are male and there is nothing like a transvestites. Then WHO asked me to write a paper on this. I wrote a paper on this for WHO. Then when I came back to Pune, on promotion as the assistant director of social welfare, then, in that capacity I had to primarily deal with training, training of government officers. So we established an institute in Pune. I was also in charge of research. So I had to do research also. I had enough experience at the central office dealing with policy and programmes that would go far ahead of our times. That time govt introduced a law to prevent prostitution. The idea was that we should treat them and rehabilitate them. My director was Mr Ghate, so he said lets call these prostitutes to the office and ask them what they want as the rehabilitation. So we called them and one of my assistant directors. She told them that this is so bad and you should not do it and this that and all. Their leader was a leader called Margi who was a very famous house keeper in Pune, Budhwar peth. She said sir can I ask you a question, Ghate said please, she said I agree with whatever you said. I am willing to give up this job I want to be settled in life. you four fellows are males here. Are anyone of you willing to marry me? We will marry and settle outside. Don't tell us all these theoretical things that this is bad and all. That was another big lesson for me to learn that it has to be a pragmatic programs not merely a slogan or a policy.

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While this was there, Karve Institute of Social Work was established in Pune. They

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asked the government to depute me there saying we want Dr. Gokhale as the Director. Government by that time was changed and an IAS officer had become the director. He had a completely different idea of social work. His idea was more about charity and welfare and not about development. So he would say Gokhale cannot be spared he cannot go. Then the Children's Aids society asked for me again he said no, thirdly the Indian Council of Social Welfare where Dr. Gore was asked me if I am willing to come as the chief executive. I said I am willing. Then they said no you cannot be spared. Then I got really fed up with this government structure because they would not allow to me do anything that was new or innovative or scientific. I said if you cannot depute me, I am resigning. Then I resigned from the government. There was only one year left, if I had stayed I would have got my pensions and all that. But I decided to go.

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Shivajirao Patwardhan, who was our great leader in leprosy, came to my house and said I am bringing a morcha of 2000 leprosy patients that you should not leave this. If you are there the patients feel they are safe. I said no, I can help you from there also. Somehow I was persuading them. Then a very small incident that occurred when I was leaving for Bombay, with bag and baggage they came to the Pune railway station. There were 200 patients there and the police wouldn't allow them to come near the train they said we will sit in front of the train but we will not allow you to go. What they said was what we want is to only garland Dr Gokhale who has been our friend who has been helping us and developing our colonies in Pune and if you don't allow us to do that, we will not allow this Deccan Queen to go. Anyway the police chief who was there said it is ok. let them come and garland and go. That shows if you



are in very good relationship with your clients, that makes a world of difference and then clients also listen to you

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Then I went from there to Bombay I joined the Indian council that was my first exposure to a national situation. I went through all the states, trying to find out what social work is being done there what needs to be done and at that stage I was in contact with Durgabhai Deshmukh and C D Deshmukh asked me if I am willing to join the India International centre as a Director of Research I said no I don't think so I am happy with the Indian council. We used to organize national conferences I used to go to every state so it was also a good experience for me. While I was there, there used to be an international council on social welfare which was a global body, when they came to Bombay and met me and all that they said you have to work part time for us. So I was half the time executive secretary of the Indian council, and half the time with the international council looking after the 47 Asian countries. Right from Japan to Afghan and below south, Australia. New Zealand right upto Iran, Afghanistan I used to look after them. The duty was once a year I must go to every country, receive their reports see what they are doing and guide them as to How a national policy should be prepared so the programmes could benefit the common people.

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During that time what happened was united nation had an office in Bangkok ie the south Asian office. There used to be a big debate on economics and if the economic



up gradation of people can solve all the problems. CD and myself on one side, and the other three people on the other side would debate this. Finally, ESCAP decided to solve this issue of economic work is a priority or developmental work. As I said that day, it was a committee consisting of the finance minister of Pakistan, the president of the reserve bank of Nepal myself and PD Kulkarni and ESCAP has published the report now. But that was the beginning of saying that development is more important, and development includes economic development. And not vice versa. So, that changed the pattern of work in the escape office also. We tried to bring that element into the planning commission in India also. While I was working with this international council, I got an opportunity to work with the rehabilitation international. It was an international organization on disability. I got an opportunity to work with the international federation of ageing. Being a social worker, I took an interest in both these subjects.

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The IFA people decided to have me on their board. So they elected me on their board. That's my introduction to the subject of ageing and rehabilitation. WHO appointed a committee to study rehabilitation and one of the things that we got out of that committee was we must understand that this concept of disability must be studied further. To give a simple eg I said if a lady in the house is short by height and she keeps her pots on a higher shelf, she feels handicapped, she cannot pick it up but we bring down the shelves she can handle it. So disability is one sector, where we have to understand the short comings of a disabled person. If eye sight is low make those students sit in front or hand him the spectacles. If the person is short, then give him he shelves that will move.



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So, we wanted to make a difference between disability and social handicapped, which can be cured and corrected through social action. Similarly when we worked with ageing we thought that this is a totally different concept and issue and this problem is going to very very big and no country is going to be prepared for that. We started working with ageing and started this international longevity centre in Pune which is the only centre in the country, that goes into research policy training etc. Then, we established a rehabilitation council in India with the help of the government of India and we also started working on social policy. At that stage we were really helped by the Tata Institute and then, later on in recent years, it was decided that the Tata Trust. We had done a review of the Tata Institute, some 20 years ago we should do it again. Again a committee was set up, I was the convener then there were two persons from other countries, then there was the director of this management centre in Bombay two more people. We gave a report suggesting some re organization in the structure of the institute and the training of the institute and their departments etc. I am happy that they accepted it. The other day when I was with Parsuraman he said that many of these suggestions have already been implemented. So I am particularly happy.

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47:36 onwards.

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i don't think we are indigenized enough. We should do it more because all these subjects that we teach whether it is community organization... you see movements

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like Ambedkar's movement where he organized the community where he told them organize yourself educate yourself and then ask for political rights. How did he organize that? How did Gandhi organize every woman and child in India? now the are really the technIQues we have and we are very proud of it. but we don't teach them. now my point is to make our training more realistic we aught to use what methods you can use probably your department can do it but your department should be able to tell them How these movements have been organized in India. dalit movement dalit panther movement, Ambedkar's movement or Gandhijis movement of Gandhian social work How did these come about? If you make a study of that and present it to the student of community organization I think they will learn much more similarly in case work you if you really do case studies of people who have really done this work with the individuals there are many eg Kamala Nimkar who did this work with disability. She was an American woman but she did it. If you take someone who has worked with tribals. Someone like Baba Amte who has worked on leprosy. The suggestion Kulkarni and myself gave was, let us develop an oral history of these people. Ask Baba Amte, now he is no more but ask him How did you develop it and record it and that will be the material that will teach you How to teach case work or group work if you study these movements. Community organization in the same way.

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I think we have a long way to go .i think at present we have no achieved what we wanted to achieve. But we will do it slowly we are doing it. There must be some push behind it and you can give it.



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Q: field work was a very important part of the education within TISS, would you like to talk a little more about the kind of field work you did

SDG: I was studying industrial relations and labor welfare, so I was put into two or three factories to work as assistant to the labor officers, but there again what I found was I think SHERIN was with me, Vishwanath Sharma was there and we all found that the entire labor welfare work in the factory was moving around the labor industrial disputes act so there was no human touch in it. So if a laborer fell down from the first floor at that time they would just get an ambulance and do it, but to develop an individual relation with the labor was never done. Later on I was put for my work at the Wadia hospital, in the child clinic which we used to run, and there again you know what I felt was anyone who comes to Wadia hospital which was not behaving in the normal way or they felt he was mentally retarded or something, then you will attend to it, but will never go to the family to find out are there any reasons for this child to behave in a particular way. If it was a delinquent child you thought of children act put him in a remand home again in a certified school and that is that. Reaching out to the person was not done in our field work which I felt was a great need. And whenever people like BEHRAM or somebody would come they would put that angle into labor welfare. It has to be developed much more.

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In field work what I felt was there should be more emphasis on the analytical reporting rather than reporting on the days and weeks you have worked in some agency. So analytical work and the supervisor to discuss that with you. It can't be a mechanical thing the supervisor has to be with you completely. So if that could be



don't field work is a very essential thing in fact that is the soul of the training. The books and the lectures give you a background but the fieldwork with your hands on you could learn much more.

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Q: Are there any memorable experiences that you recall with your fellow students?

SDG: Yes I do remember some of them. Specially we had this close group as I said boys and girls together and we had really a wonderful experience there. no stories about it because those stories got them married later on.

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Q: As students what did you do for recreation? where did you hang out? what did you do other than studies?

SGD: in Nagpada we had a great opportunity. Next door was the Nagpada neighborhood House. They would have a volleyball club they had a tennis club because it was right in the same building downstairs. We enjoyed that very much. That whole locality of Nagpada in one sense was a great educational centre. it was within the slum, then we had the restaurants below where all kinds of criminals would come and we had the JJ dharmashal next door where all the people on the streets were got in and kept there. We were placed in the labor unions also. I worked with George Fernandes, the taxi drivers union, so the point is the location was excellent. Andheri we had nothing. Nothing but the building. Opportunity to mix with the community opportunity to mix with the class was not there. I don't know if it is there in Chembur also. I think it is a great need for the students to be directly in touch with the students

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around them because these are future leaders of India and if there is no direct contact and only through the books I don't think that's enough.

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Q: We have no photographs of the Andheri campus or Nagpada campus except for one or two can you describe the campus, the library.

SGD: Did Lala's book give any photographs? Lala has done a good book where he talks about the Tata Institute and how it grew. The Andheri building was two bungalows set together. They were residential bungalows and we had to convert them into classrooms and libraries and things like that. The first bungalow was Kumarappa's office and professors rooms. The second building had the classrooms and top was the library. Then there was enough compound around it so we could move out sit under a tree and read or do something. That way it was a good campus. But it was not an ideal campus from a social point of view.

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Q: do you have any memories of when you went to Kurukshetra to hear Mahatma Gandhi?

DG: one of the advantages was while we were there in Delhi we were allowed to go to the prayer meetings of Mahatma Gandhi. We used to sit in the front and Bapuji would allow one question to students. So Sughad and myself we were sitting at a prayer meeting and we thought we are very bright students. Students of economics and higher percentages and all that. We had an ego swollen head people. So I asked Gandhiji I said, Bapu ji we are all talking about equal distribution of wealth so there

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would be an equality in society but we have a problem as students of economics, he said what is your problem? I said I want to know How do we distribute the wealth in the current Indian situation because we don't have wealth, because if you have wealth you can distribute, if you don't what do you do? So he looked at me in a very typical way and he said if you don't have wealth what do you have? And I said we have poverty. Immediately he shot back saying if you distribute poverty in an equal way the results would be the same. So distributing poverty or wealth equality would be brought about and that is my purpose. So we were happy with these occasions.

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in the early part we were staying in the constitutional house and early morning Sardar Patel, and others were going on a morning walk so once we asked his daughter can we just follow you we wont disturb we just want to listen because Sardar didn't talk anything. She said yes and then it was a great experience. These were the early days of our independence. Lots of issues were raised. Sardar was a typical person of few words. but words which were with many, "pregnant words" so just like attending Gandhiji's prayer meetings following Sardar during his morning walk that was good. plus meeting with Lady Mountbatten and she would tell us about what she thinks about social work and all that. Most important part was we had two meetings with PANDIT NEHRU in his house. he gave us tea every time. The first meeting was difficult in the sense I was sitting right next to the door and BEHRAM was sitting at the other end. So Panditji came and shook hands and said DR MEHTA How are you? I said I am just a student, but he developed a very good relation with us as students. You will be surprised in those days Prime Minister was not out of reach for people.



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When I came back and married I sent a letter to Pandit Nehru saying I want your blessings and he replied. Now it is so difficult to happen but in Delhi was a big experience to meet the leaders of the country and talk to them.

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Q: were you there with the student group when Mahatma Gandhi when he was assassinated?

DG: it happened when we came back to Bombay. We were shocked, terribly shocked.

Q: you said you also did work in the child guidance clinic, now that was the first field action project of TISS. is there anything you remember about the child guidance project in those days?

That was an experience for me because Kamala Bhuta used to teach us the various types of problems that came in childhood. delinquency or mental retardness or behavior disorder and she taught How to give an IQ test and we started doing that but we realized at the end of six months that the IQ test is an indicative test and does not give a final answer of the mental condition. Second thing we realized was we don't have tests that are actually indigenous or that will be helpful to Indian children. Later on Kamath and all develop the test. The point is in a test for eg if you give them a drawing and say draw this... a boy from a village who has never seen it cant draw it. If you think of asking him question on grammar he cant do it. There was a greater need to develop Indian tests which were later developed. The other thing we learnt was that problem of delinquency is not necessarily a mental problem. many time it is the

outcome of economic and social circumstances out of which it is born. So the child guidance clinic has really to go into to the home visit, talk to the parents talk to the teachers and all that. So it has to be work done at the home at the school and very little at the clinic. Later on I think they developed it.

Q: where was the child guidance clinic? Who was in charge?

SDG: At the Wadia hospital. Right from the beginning.

Dr. Shah was one of the early doctors on the subject. KAMLA BHUTA was there and MASANI used to come for any psychiatric issues. three of four students.

-What was the public response?

they used to come but only with severe problems and we were not equipped to handle it. We did understand the problems. Kamla was very sure to develop indigenous techniques to deal with the problems.

Q: Is there anything you would like to say on the occasion of the platinum jubilee to the students or other stake holder about TISS

DG: I must state very clearly that the training given at the Tata Institute is an extremely valuable training which is going to train the future leadership of the country. I would also say there is need for indigenization of the techniques. I would also say we are not adequately using modern techniques like media for eg in our day to day teachings. We do not have enough case studies to develop that. Lastly I would say that if you really want to be an Alma Mata of the Indian leadership of the future we do have to change not only to add more subjects but we have to make the training more India related. Labor Welfare or social work it has to be related to the grass roots. Perhaps you are reorganizing the campus in Tuljapur. You see that campus can give

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you a lot of new experiences. My summation would be if we are able to look at the Indian problems and then tailor our training to suite to solve the Indian problems on a mass level, I think we will be real Alma Matar for the country.