



Prof. Lina Kashyap

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Camera/Sound: Prof. KP Jayasankar

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LK: Oh, I will remember even my admission process because it was in the height of the monsoon, we always had it in June, and I remember the day of the interviews it was raining and it was flooded all over the city, and we took several hours to come and we were... my fiancé, he came with me and another participant... candidate who also studied with me in Elphinstone.

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LK (cont.): Both of us had applied, so we came and the then Registrar, he was so nice, he gave us... we were , I think we were looking like drowned cats, but he gave us a towel to dry our hair and he gave us a hot cup of coffee. That, instantly I felt that yes; this is the place I want to study. And I had heard about TISS and I had decided I'm going to study here. Gita Shah has been my inspiration, and she told me about it- she's related to me- so she told me that this is something that you must do. And since then, I had wanted to do it; and because of that I took sociology. So that it would help me, you know, in... to come to TISS. The admission process otherwise went well and I stayed in the hostel because we were very few, we were just ten students of each specialisation. And five of them were, you know, mid-reserve... I mean, they were actually deputed candidates from the different states. So we had more from the North East, and I think one man from Jammu & Kashmir. But... so there were only five of us who were, kind of, general candidates, so all of us used to stay in the hostel.

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LK (cont.): And that was my first time of living away from home, and so I used to ring up every night. But the faculty here was so wonderful. You know, it was like a family because I think we



were hardly, not even... I think less than a hundred students on the campus. And the entire faculty used to sit on that front ditch and they would, you know, they would be quite personal in their approach towards students. And one could see the concern and the care, you know, that they gave to the students. Even our hostel warden was Professor... Mrs. Kaikobad and she was such a lovely warden, so nice. In fact that whenever we went out... we were out of coffee, we would go to visit her knowing that she would invite us in for coffee. But if Professor Kaikobad had opened the door, he would stand at the door and not let us in.]. He would say, 'Haan, so what... what is it you girls want?'

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LK (cont.): So saying, 'No, no, no, we want to see Mrs. Kaikobad.' Saying, 'No, no, no, you can tell me.' So we said, 'No, we can't tell you, we have to talk to her only.' Then she would come and she would say, 'No, no, come on, let them in.' And said, 'Would you all like coffee?' Yes, yes, we would like coffee. .] You know, he would say, 'you know they've come only for that, there no other... come then ... the here with you.' Saying, 'No, no, no, we have to... you know, talk about other things.'

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Q: ... you were talking about... Mrs. Kaikobad, do you have other fond memories of other teachers?

LK: Yeah, yeah... of Mrs. Manu Desai... at that point, you know, she was actually very absent-minded, and she used to tell us that she's going to give us an assignment the previous... the next week, but we have to remind her. And of course as students we never, ever reminded her! And so



the week would pass, and then at the end of it she would say, 'I thought I said that I was to give you an assignment?' Saying, 'Oh, yah, you had mentioned something like that.' You were supposed to remind! Said... I mean, you know, she was very absent-minded. I think Mrs. Apte- it was her first year of teaching, at that time, when we were second year students- and, so she actually told us that, 'I'm new to teaching, haan, so bear with me if there is anything.' You know, she was such a lovely person but because she came from the field, she had so much to share.

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LK (cont.): So both Manu Desai and Mrs. Apte were really wonderful teachers. In fact I think I had the best, I had... I had all of them. I was taught by Dr Gauri Banerjee, Professor Kaikobad, Professor Panakal and Dr Gore, all of them... Miss Matthew. Miss Matthew was also, that was her first year and she was also new. I had jaundice, you know, at the... the first semester, end of the first semester, so during the exam time. So I was isolated and Professor Panakal, we used to talk quite a bit because he used to move round the campus, look at the trees and all that, and we used to ask him all kinds of things about trees. But he came to see me, and he said, 'don't worry, write what you can... you know, what you can remember.' I said I'm so blind because they've given me so many antibiotics, you know; do get down the fever and anything. But... saying doesn't worry; as long as you write, at the most you will get a supplementary.

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LK (cont.): Now, and that was...], it was alarming in itself, but you know he said. But even Dr Banerjee, who we were in mortal... you know, we were always in awe of her. But even she came to see me, to say don't worry Leena, write whatever you can, you know. I understand, you know,



if you are light-headed. But fortunately I didn't get a supplementary, but... for the casework, you know, this thing. But, also another very...I always remember that my mother also used to do voluntary work. So she used to go to Chandanvadi where Mrs. Gore also went, so she... they knew each other well. So when I was not well, she must have rung up in the hostel and didn't get me, so she got worried. And... She rang up Mrs. Gore and Mrs. Gore must have rung up the hostel and said, no Leena is not well. So she got worried and she actually came to see me. In that, oh, your mother had called and you are not responding so, you know, I wondered... I came to see you. But there was such a furor in the campus... you know, in the hostel because Mrs. Gore came to see me, kind of.

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LK (cont.): But... I mean, I think those two years of being a student here, I'll never forget. They were really I think, very moulding years also. And certain things that we did and certain friendships we made at that point, I think... I'm, I'm still in touch with some of my classmates. In fact quite a few of them are now in Pune. And we... two of them, I got in touch with them after fifteen, twenty years. And we were wondering whether we'd recognise each other, and it was something of course, you know, basic features don't change so we recognised each other. And we were so thrilled, and then several times between Bombay and Pune we met and it was great, it was very nice, you know. We caught up with each other and with each other's lives and everything because when you're living together, you know, you're embroiled in each other's lives and everything, so. Very nice.

Q: Do you have any memories of your fieldwork experience, anything?



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LK: Oh yeah. Fieldwork... in the first year I was in Banganga, in a very interesting school set up... a school set up for children of drivers and housemaids, you know. Malabar Hill is an area of bungalows and things. So these children would go to the Municipal School and when they weren't in school, they would come to this. It... It was like a, an extracurricular activity kind of a school. And so working with those children was in fact a very interesting thing because some of them were having problems related to being left alone a lot of the time. So, they had got into petty gangs and they were doing some petty stealing also, some of them were not going to school regularly. So those were the kind of things that we were taking up with the children. And basically, developmental activities with children. And in the second year I was at Bapnugarh, and while... I think I grew up during my placement at Bapnugarh because I was engaged at that time, and I... you know, Manu Desai was my supervisor. And I used to side always with the daughters-in-law.

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LK (cont.): And she had to point out one day that, 'do you know what you're doing?' You know, you're taking your life experience and, kind of... you know, feeling that of course the daughters-in-law only must be right, and there must be everything wrong with the mothers-in-law. And, so you're tending to look at it only from one side. So I realized that yes, I was doing that. And it was, in fact... why I say I grew up because 'til I was placed in Bapnugarh, I could never believe that mothers don't love their children. I always felt, all mothers love their children. Na, it is not possible for a woman to have a child and not love. You know, not feel motherly towards her. But there were women there who because of their life experiences had, you know, almost tried to



harm their... the children. Because children under five used to be with them in the... in Bapnugarh. So... that was same. So I really grew up I think in that... matured a lot during that placement.

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Q: How do think TISS has contributed to your growth as a professional, as an individual?

LK: I think, tremendous. You know, I was very... I was a very impatient person. I was also quite hot-tempered. I think I learnt to be far more patient, to be more tolerant, and to be more accepting of people. And those were the first few lessons that I learnt, you know, when I was studying here. Then I learnt a lot of things about myself while... after I started working. I learnt I had leadership qualities, I was quite bold, I could take initiative; and I also learnt I was genuinely interested in children. And I had... I had something in me which attracted children to me. And children were attracted to me; I was attracted to children so it worked out like that. And I worked... after I graduated I worked for two years in Bapnugarh because they were very keen. But then I worked for the foster care project where I worked for about five, six years. And I did a whole lot of things, and I think I really grew, honed in my skills and it really moulded my personality. TISS, the fieldwork, the work I was doing, working with voluntary social workers.

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LK (cont.): You know, who had given a lot... who were giving really a lot of their time and energy into it. They also taught me a lot. But, essentially I think. We had a telephone operator, I... what was her name? She used to say that when I was in the Institute, I was like a little moth, and.



Q: Mrs. Baker you're talking about?

LK: Haan, Mrs. Baker. And you know she saw me two, three years after I graduated, after I started working and she's saying, 'You know you've grown into a butterfly.' That is, you've really blossomed. And I think that is... it, you know, I didn't remain introverted. In fact nobody could believe I was introverted after that. And, you know I was far more forthcoming and had lot more confidence in my, you know, in communicating. I realized that I'm quite a good communicator.

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LK (cont.): And I also realized through my fieldwork that I could also write that I was interested in research as well. And, you know, I think it gave me a great deal, you know. I think a lot of what I am today is due to the training that I received here in TISS.

Q: How did you... when did you come back to TISS after your... you'd finished your Masters?

LK: Yeah, I think I'm... hardly left TISS I can say. Because only the first two years after I graduated, and I worked in a place called Yazonka Beti because it was close to my parents... you know, in-laws house. But I think from 2003... No, two... sorry, 1973, I started supervising students for fieldwork. And, so I was in constant... Miss Matthew was the fieldwork coordinator at that time, in constant touch with the Institute because I used to come for supervisory meetings. And the faculty here used to come to meet me because of the students they had placed for fieldwork.

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LK (cont.): So between '73 and '79 I had been in touch with students... with the Institute. In '79 I came back to do my Ph.D. because I felt I had saturated whatever I could do in the field, you



know, for myself and I felt I needed to move on and to learn more. I had done a research project during my work in the field, and I felt that I needed to grow more in my skills in research. So this opportunity came up when there was an opportunity to be a research fellow, where I could- it was a UGC scholarship- where I could work three days of the week with the department, with the Institute and three days I could do my Ph.D.. So I thought that was the best of both worlds because I... though I wanted to do my Ph.D., I was wondering how I'm going to sit all day long and five hours a week, I mean a day, on... at a desk and read. Because my work in the field involved a lot of moving around and meeting a lot of different people and things like that.

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LK (cont.): So, so I came back in '79 to do my... I registered for Ph.D. and to do my doctoral... you know, so. I was working three days with the Department of Family and Child Welfare and was doing my Ph.D.. My guide was Miss Mandakini Khandekar and I selected her though everybody said, oh goodness, you know, she is a stickler and she's very strict and everything. I said I need such a person, I'm very verbose and I need somebody who will you know, teach me correct research. And I always felt she was one of our few blue-blooded social work researchers. The other one was, to my mind was Professor Humchandran. So, I was very happy doing my Ph.D. with her, Miss Khandekar and I think she really taught me well.

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LK (cont.): At times if I would get, if she felt that you know I was stagnating or I was fumbling, then she would... at that time. You know, after my predoctoral- I took three years to do my predoctoral because I was working with the department- she resigned from the Institute and she



went to Pune. So I used to send her material, but even sitting so far she could make out if, whenever I was not doing much or I was not sure of what to do. Then she'd write me a note and say, I think you're not doing much. You need to do this; one, two, three, four, she would write step-by-step by processes of what I should be doing. And true enough, you know, it was almost as if she could read my mind. It was quite uncanny. But she understood me so well.

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LK (cont.): And really learnt a lot from her and actually I really enjoyed my PhD. I know some of my other colleagues when, you know, they had... you know, they were not that lucky with their guides or they were not so happy doing their research. But I was absolutely happy, learning a lot, and I also was feeling that my PhD, the... the dissertation itself is going to make a difference to me. Because what I was doing, I knew that I'm going to be able to translate it in the field and try it out. Because what I was going to do is think of social work interventions and then kind of see how I could translate it into the field. You know in social work sometimes things have come from the field and then we have theorised. Here I tried to theorise, because there were not many people working with children with disabilities, and especially with children and families... children having hearing impairment and their families.

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LK (cont.): And so I was theorising from... I was theorising and then going to try out from the field, so I was really trying to see how I could manage the praxis. And it really worked because I was in touch with a lot of the agencies; schools, special schools.

Q: You've been involved with the area of Disability Studies from... you know, within Social



Work right from its inception. Could you talk a little about your field and how it's changed over the years?

LK: Yeah, yeah. In fact, right from the time I started my Ph.D. I decided on doing my Ph.D. on disabled children. I'd been working with socially deprived or vulnerable children, you know, for the last ten years. But I felt that I want to do my Ph.D. in, with children with whom I will be able to work later on. And so when I looked at the field of disability I realized that the visually impaired had a lot of patronage; political and you know, non-governmental.

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LK (cont.): The orthopedically handicapped also had quite a lot of services going for them. From the other two, I felt that the hearing impaired... hearing impairment is such an invisible disability that unless you have an occasion to talk to the person, the person looks totally normal and you cannot even see the disability. And so I felt that if I worked with these children and if intervention is early enough, then they can live absolutely normal lives and they can live, you know, and are integrated in a hearing world much more easily. And I also realized that there's hardly any social work intervention with hearing impaired children and their families, so that was one reason why I selected them.

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LK (cont.): And as I was... while I was doing my Ph.D. also I was in touch with the schools.

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LK: In the 80s the disability field was quite fragmented. Each... NGOs were working for



particular disability groups alone and there wasn't that much of unity or cooperation among the different disability groups. But in, you know, with the International Year for the Disabled and the Decade for the Disabled and you know when that, as... when that came along people in the field felt the need to have... to have more collaboration with each other. And also with this new thinking on community-based rehabilitation, you couldn't go into a community and then say we'll find only and we'll work only with the blind or we'll work only with the orthopedically handicapped. You had to work with all disability groups and every individual whom you found in the community. So they realized that there is a need to have, to collaborate and to have professionals who are able to work with all disability groups.

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LK (cont.): The other thing that happened was that at that point- I think in the, in the 90s- these laws came up, three very landmark laws were passed related to disability. That is, the Rehabilitation Council of India Act to bring together, you know, to actually standardize all human par training in the area of disability; then the Persons with Disability Act, which was a very comprehensive act which covered everything; and the National Trust Act. Now the Persons with Disability Act, you know, the RCI Act- the Rehabilitation Council of India Act- the Ministry of, the erstwhile Ministry of Social Welfare had put it together and had passed it, and there were a lot of loopholes in it. And as an NGO and a professional group, there were protests about it, regarding some of these loopholes in the RCI Act.

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LK (cont.): So when the Ministry wanted to float the Persons with Disability bill they sent it to,



you know, different national-level NGOs. And we had done quite a lot of protesting, and we had spearheaded discussions around the Rehabilitation Council of India Act, so the government sent it... Ministry sent it to us at TISS. And we promptly called meetings, several meetings of NGOs and social workers and other professionals in the field to discuss threadbare the bill. And we made very detailed suggestions on it and we sent it to the Ministry, and a lot of the suggestions I must say were taken on and you know, they were placed in the revised bill. And so the... and this Act was passed, the Persons with Disability Act was passed in the Parliament.

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LK (cont.): The third Act, which was the National Trust Act, again as a bill... the government had learnt its lessons by then and so they asked for a lot of NGO and professional discussion on it. And I remember going for a discussion to the National Institute for Mental Handicap and everybody was very agitated about the bill because, though we were talking about community-based rehabilitation at that time, that bill talked more about institutionalization. And so we said we are going back ten years. So when the secretary from the Ministry came for this meeting, you know, he asked us what are our comments on it and we very, very frankly told him that this bill is not good. And because of... because it is more institutional-oriented rather than community based. So he said if you don't like it, alright, then you rewrite it and you tell me how it should be. So- this was in Hyderabad- all of us in the evening had originally decided to go shopping; we took it as a challenge, none of us went, we stayed up through the night and rewrote that bill.

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LK (cont.): And we presented it to the secretary the previous, the next day and he understood,



you know, what we were saying. And we also told him that, look, this is not our last word on it, you need to discuss it with NGOs in... You need to take it around the country and you need to discuss it. So, well, the Ministry did do that and at the end, you know, all the comments were put together and there was a final drafting committee that sat again in National Institute for Mental Handicap in Hyderabad, and I was one of the five member drafting committee. And we were just thinking, oh goodness we opened our big mouth and so now we have to do this work! But I think it was a good experience to do this and for me, I felt that- you know- thinking like a social worker and a professional made all the difference because there was an NGO participation and there was a psychologist and then there was a government person.

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LK (cont.): So to bring in this professional input also made a difference in the way the National Trust Act then was formulated and it got passed. So one felt that, you know, whatever little dent one could make in the field, I was able to do. And subsequently the field has really grown more, NGOs in the area of disabilities have come up, also multi-category disability groups have come up. Another change has been the disabled themselves coming together as an organisation, disabled rights groups have come up, and they have been strong in their lobbying efforts. And, so I think when... at the Institute, when we restructured in 2006 and... I felt that with, you know, when we... when the School of Social Work was restructured and the five departments became five centres within the School of Social Work, I felt quite strongly that we need to add a sixth centre on Disability Studies and action.

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LK(cont.): Because the Institute had come of age and also the field had come of age to have more professionals- especially trained social workers- in the field. Not that trained... trained social workers have worked in this field ever since this, you know, rehabilitation for disabled had been thought of, especially in hospital settings. But in community based settings- not just clinical work, but working with families- that field has grown a lot and today I think social workers also play a pivotal role in the multidisciplinary team, you know, working in the field of rehab... disability rehabilitation.

Q: Coming to the education within TISS, one... I think one very important thing about social work education is the relationship between the theory and practice. Would you like to talk a little about that? How's teaching and education in TISS different from a general university kind of education?

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LK: Yeah.

Q: ...or even other kinds of professional education.

LK: I think when I came back in '84 as a full-time faculty, you know, as a lecturer with the Department of Family and Child Welfare, it was really at that time that I realised that our curriculum had almost frozen, it was almost the same as it was when I was studying here. And the few, you know, we were young people who had recently joined the Department and we realised that we needed to indigenise social work theory and practice and we set about doing that. And I think that has been the most important contribution and that... of TISS and that is what distinguishes TISS social work education from others.



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LK (cont.): Because today I think our social work education is very contextualised, very indigenised and we are talking, all our courses are very relevant to meeting the needs of the field. We need to work much more on it. But the erstwhile specialisations were also very geared to the fields of practice and we were meeting the demands of the fields of practice. I think social work faculty had also been playing a role in policy making at the national level, and the reason is because we were very grounded in the field. And so I think the course, the MA program did have a lot of praxis- you know, theory and practice- not only that, also that it had become quite indigenised. And all our examples and everything were from the field. What we need to do more and more is write, which we are not doing enough of.

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LK (cont.): And I think when... with the Department of Family and Child Welfare had this unit of Family Studies and- attached to it- and with this unit, with the faculty in that unit the Department faculty also worked towards indigenising specifically family-centred social work and, you know, related areas. And then we also have our, all our... I mean I can talk more about the courses which were taught by the Department of Family and Child Welfare. Even children's and women's courses were highly contextualised and based on- very relevant- because they were based on the needs of the field.

Q: Overall would you say there's been a... a shift, I mean [?] in disability education or with families. I mean, there has been a shift from, you know, casework, individual kind of work to more community rights based. Would you say that... would you see that kind of thing at all?



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LK: You know, yes. I would say that, you know, in the 70s it was very clinical and the context was not that important, only the person was important and that's why casework had more prominence, or group work. But as we began to realise that context is very important, community work and community development and community organisation became very important for us. But casework and group work didn't lose its prominence because we realised we needed to contextualise even those methods of practice. And when we began to do that, it started becoming definitely more relevant. So I would say that, you know, if we remain much more in tune with, and... With the developments in, you know, in the field then we will continue to stay relevant.

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Q: What do you see as, you know, future direction because today the, I mean field of practice itself has become very much more complex and, you know, do you see generic degrees in social work as useful, do you see a lot of specialised sort of fields developing. How would you look at the entire field of social intervention and the role of social work?

LK: Yeah, no I think as far as TISS is concerned, we... our strength has been our specialisations. Our students and faculty have been known for their specialist understanding in, of certain fields of practice. So I think that we... there was no problem with the specialisations per se. And today we have kind of restructured our course to make it more generic, but actually speaking today it's neither generic nor specialised. So actually the department... the school is actually reviewing the program and, you know, we can come to a situation where we could offer certain specialisations within the School of Social Work in certain niche areas.



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LK (cont.): Like we offer a MA in Social Work in Disability Studies and Practice, or from our Tuljapur campus we are offering an MA in Social Work in Rural Development. So we may in, you know, maybe in the... in a couple of years we would need to offer in other niche areas; for instance, Criminology and Correctional Practice, or in Mental Health, or in Child and Family social work. Because these are niche areas, these will always be fields of practice where the demand for social workers is very high and people who are trained in working with this, these vulnerable groups. So... and we can also have maybe a generic social work also, we can offer a generic social work as well. But... which would be quite tight where we would offer it more in terms of, you know, which would lead to generic practice basically.

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Q: From a student to a teacher, how do you see that shift in role and do you... would you like to reflect on the roles?

LK: Yeah, yeah. In fact, as I told you, as a student I was quite timid and very mild, with a temper. I don't know how it all went together. But when, you know when I was doing my Ph.D., after my pre-doctoral I wanted to resign and do full time Ph.D. in order to finish it and not make it my lifetime project, so when I asked Dr Gore and Mrs. Apte, they didn't want to let me, you know, resign. And they said, no you need to come back and, you know, to teaching. And I said something like this, I'll never forget I told Mrs. Apte, I'm not sure. I know I make a good field worker, I'm not sure whether I'll make a good teacher and she really fired me roundly. She said what nonsense, you know, of course you'll make a good teacher.



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LK (cont.): But then I think I reflected on it and I really worked on it, that after knowing my content well, then I started working on the teaching pedagogy; how do I communicate this to the students in a way that they will understand and remember it, you know, and be able to reflect. Not give it to them, not give only my opinion or my thoughts, but how would I teach it in a way that would help make them think and reflect. And I think then over the last few years I have been working more on teaching pedagogy. So when I was working with a group of faculty- not only from the Institute but from other schools of social work as well- towards developing a curriculum in family, in counselling... in training counselors for marriage and family counseling, my whole thought was yes we know our subject matter, but do we know how to deliver it right? You know.

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LK (cont.): And so we underwent training in training skills, and these were trainers from UK, Relate, who really trained us in training skills, and it was a three week trainers training, where the first week they demonstrated training skills. In the second week we were supposed to practice some of them, and the third week was a total transfer of technology and knowledge which we saw and, you know. At that point we were all, you know, teachers at mid-level and not very junior but quite senior. And so we were presenting to each other, which was not easy at all. You know it's so much easier to make a presentation to students, but in front of your own colleagues it is far more difficult. But I think, so... what I have learnt that yes, I make a good teacher because I'm now, I'm concentrating on teaching technology also and pedagogy.



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LK (cont.): You know, not to use too much of... I'm not talking about the technology in terms of audiovisual and this thing. That as well, but even in terms of using exercises, simulation, you know, and small group discussions, case studies, you know a whole variety of teaching pedagogy.

Q: What do you think is the, you know, place of TISS in social work education and social work practice. It has played a pioneering role, would you like to...?

LK: Yeah, it has played a pioneering, pioneering role and I don't think we can sit on our laurels and our history, I think we have to ensure that we continue to play a leadership role and we continue to help other departments of social work also grow in terms of the knowledge and resources.

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LK (cont.): Something like that was thought of actually, where we wanted to you know share resources through e-learning. And the UGC... we had applied and, you know, it hasn't really come through. But I think that TISS needs to continue to play this kind of a leadership role, not only through its associations; the association of schools of social work but even with, you know, outside those associations in terms of sharing our knowledge, our expertise, and. You know some of it we are doing through the Global Fund for instance or through some of our training programs that we have. And we need to continue to do that, I think that's a very important role that we have as teachers.

Q: Would you like to say anything about, you know, field action projects within the Institute and



the role they played in.?

LK: No, I think field action also has been the strength of the School of Social Work and the Departments, the erstwhile Departments of Social Work. They have served several purposes. They have helped us to experiment with what is needed in the field; we saw something that is needed in the field and, you know, we demonstrated how to, how to give that intervention. And different departments had different ways of doing it, you know. Speaking of the Department of Family and Child Welfare, our thinking always was that we need to demonstrate the need for a particular kind of service and, you know, start it, document it and then after it completes a gestation period, either hand it over to the government, or to an NGO which has similar aims and objectives, or make it into an NGO and put it afloat and then take up another, a new field action project.

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LK (cont.): So in this way actually, the child guidance clinic at the Nagpada Neighbourhood House, or the counseling cell in the High Court... you know the counseling cell in the High Court was the precursor of the Family Courts. And the data that we generated through that, those two counselors who were placed in the High Court, that data helped Justice Sujata Manohar to push for the Family Court Act. And so those counsellors were then taken over, they were the first counselors in the Family Court, in the Mumbai Family Court. The other is the Childline, which has... which is a national helpline now. It started as a field action project with the, in Mumbai, with the department. The Special Cell for Women and Children in the Office of the Police Commissioner has been taken over by the State government and we are also replicating it in



other states of the country.

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LK (cont.): Because see some... one of the other things is that we want it replicated across the country and that is something that is happening. I think we still need to work with the State government for their greater involvement in the project and to ensure that they give enough financial support to the scheme, you know. At present the, we have given it to the, the new Ministry of Women and Child Development to put it on a national scale and to duplicate it on a national scale, like Childline was duplicated. So I think field action projects play a very important role. It is also a learning centre for our own students and also because of documentation, it helps us to reflect on what we have been doing, the kind of interventions we've been making, the kind of work that we've been doing with stakeholders, with all stakeholders in the whole process.

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LK (cont.): So it has served a lot of these purposes and so field action projects are a very important part of the work of the School of Social Work. And should continue, I feel. You know, it could take on a different... it could take on different dimensions, but it should continue.

D: With your students, what do you feel are some of the challenges that you face in the field of social work?

LK: Yeah. One of the biggest challenges in the early days was recognition as a professional social worker. And initially it was very problematic, and it was not easy for NGOs to accept trained social workers and pay them for their work. And... because voluntary social workers



always felt that they were doing the work and they were not getting paid, and so what different... what is the difference that the social, trained social workers were bringing.

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LK (cont.): But as we were able to show them the difference that the trained social workers were making, the acceptance scenario is much better. But as we- you know- as the fields, different fields evolved what has also happened is a blurring of lines between psychology, counseling, social work and so that is also a challenge; how to negotiate those blurring lines. Also the bombardment of different, of lot more theoretical frameworks and a lot more knowledge, you know, about people, situations and you know interventions that, you know, the challenge was to choose the right kind of knowledge that you wanted to use in your work. So there were these. Of course the world over, social work is now again getting diffused and they're facing the challenge of even their very existence as a professional group.

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LK (cont.): We have not been able to have a council for social work education at the centre, you know, a national council which is very important for standardizing social work education in the country. Because that is in fact the biggest challenge that we are facing, because there is a mushrooming of private universities with departments where they don't offer any fieldwork, where they hardly have any teachers who are trained and competent enough to teach. And with the result... and then the graduates who pass out are called social workers, where they neither have the knowledge nor the skills. So to work towards standardization and some kind of licensing of social workers which would help to maintain standards and ethics in the profession I



think is one of our biggest challenges today.

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Q: Is there anything else you'd like to say. Anything given that this year is TISS Platinum Jubilee.

LK: To think that actually when we talk about Platinum Jubilee it is actually the Platinum Jubilee of social work education in India. And to think that we are 75 years old and yet we have such a long way to go yet, because the field is evolving and changing. And there is so much that has to be done as people's needs change, we also change with them to work towards a just and equitable society.

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LK (cont.): But, I mean, I don't feel 75 years old kind of] because I feel we still have to grow and evolve so much that we, I'm sure we need more than another 75 years to do that, though we've matured in the profession. But I think, I look at the future of social work education and practice with a lot of hope and positivism that we have still the opportunity and we still need to do a lot in the field, you know, to bring about our mission and vision that we have of the Institute of a just and equitable society. So we have a lot of work cut out for us. And 75 years is a time to reflect and, you know, to look at what we have done, what we need to do more but at the same time not to stop and to go on because there's a lot to be done.

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LK (cont.): And I'm looking forward to the Platinum Jubilee though I know I'm going, we're



going, we're all going to be inundated with so much work but there's going to be so much excitement, and. I'm looking forward to the alumni meeting because it's always great, you know, to catch up with alumni and to know where they are and what they're doing. We have some remarkable alumna all over the, all over India and the world in fact I think.