

**Prof. Madhav S. Gore**

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Camera/Sound: Prof. K.P. Jayasankar

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The late Prof. M.S. Gore (1921-2010) was an eminent alumnus of TISS who graduated in 1945. He then did his MA in Sociology from Bombay University in 1948 and became a faculty member at the Delhi School of Social Work. He did his doctoral studies from Columbia University, USA, graduating in 1961. In 1962, he returned to TISS as Director until his retirement in 1982. He also served as the Vice Chancellor of the University of Bombay from 1983 to 1986 and Chancellor of JNU between 1997 and 2002. His major areas of interest have been social work and sociology, on which he has written several books and papers. His book on Ambedkar's social and political thought won him the Ghurye Award for the best book published in sociology in 1993. He was also a recipient of various awards, the most prominent amongst them being the Padma Bhushan presented by the President of India in 1975.

This interview was recorded shortly before his demise in 2010.

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Q: Good morning Prof. Gore. Thank you very much for agreeing to this interview. You are a very key figure in the development of TISS and as we celebrate this Platinum Jubilee we feel it is very important to talk to you, to get your memories, reflections on your association with the Institute.

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So we want to start right at the beginning with your student days. Could you talk a little about your background and how you decided to join the Sir Dorabji Tata Graduate School of Social Work?

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Well, when I graduated from college in 1938. I didn't have many choices. I was a student of English literature but I had not done as well as I had expected and thus didn't want to follow it up from the point of view of a career.

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Actually in 1942 because of the Independence movement I didn't attend any MA classes. Prof. Gokarn was my professor, he said I could come and join next year. At that time I was not quite sure I wanted to go ahead with an MA in English.

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By chance one of our friends; he happened to have seen the Indian Journal of Social Work. He brought it to my notice and one of my brothers in law, he had heard about it. He said "That's a good institution. You can get trained in labour welfare."

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At that time Labour Welfare was the field and jobs were readily available for a good career. So that's how I got to know about the institute. I applied in 1943 and was admitted. We were just about 15 students.

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What had happened was that until 1942 the Institute had a policy of admitting students every second year. So that one group was through before the next one was admitted. Partly because of space limitations and faculty limitations and so on.

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But in 1942 they decided to admit students in 1943. And we were about 15 of us who were admitted during that year. Nearly half the students were Parsis. Four girls and one boy. One was a Muslim, one was a scheduled caste.

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It was a combination of Bombay, suburban areas and remote areas. As it happened during that year, Dr Kumarappa who was the head of the school, he had gone to America for getting more Library material and other help. Dr. Behram Mehta was functioning as the head.

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We had Dr. Murthy, Dr. Mukherji, none of them were permanent staff. Two or three were temporary. Dr. Masani, Dr. Cama and Dr. Mhaskar, they came as part time staff to give their lectures and go. So we had a very small faculty. In a way it was good because we got to know them closely.

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But from another point of view, they were kind of insecure about whether they were going to continue in the Institute in the following year. And as it happened, the next year, i e our senior year, two professors we liked were discontinued.

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From the academic point of view, Dr. Mehta was the most stimulating, he was not disciplined, but on the spur of the moment he excited us in terms of ideas. He questioned traditional thinking on certain subjects.

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That experience was enriching in spite of the changes in the faculty and so on. But I was not satisfied when I got my diploma. Not satisfied because I felt I wanted to specialize in something and maybe I was not interested in field work.

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So I decided in 1945-46... I was a research fellow. I did that one year and wrote a thesis on the socio economic condition of school teachers. In 1946 I joined the Bombay University School of Sociology and Political Science. I spent 2 years there.

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The teaching was limited. 4 days a week 2 lectures a day so 8 hrs. There wasn't much that we could get. Prof Ghurye was a very good teacher. Prof Murthy was ill. Though he used to come and take lectures and there were two others who were part time.

00:07:32,118 I found that I was not satisfied so I had to do a lot of work on my own. For that I used the Tata Institute. I used to live there, sleep on the library tables and other places. I have mentioned that in my memoirs and I used the library and read

much beyond I was required to and it helped me do well in my masters.

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And by the time I completed my master's degree I already had an offer. Delhi School of Social Work had started in 1946-47 and they were looking for a teacher in Sociology and social work background. Since I had both they invited me. So I joined them in 1947 and I was there till 1962 about 13 - 14 years.

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Q: Would you like to say anything more about your student days at the Nagpada Neighborhood house?

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Well, Nagpada Neighborhood House was really a neighborhood house, in the sense, it was meant to provide recreational facilities to the neighborhood, Our first Director, Dr. Clifford Manshardt, he was the advisor to the Tatas, he advised them to start this school.

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What his ideas were I don't know because he was not a regular social worker in the American context. He was a settlement worker, but he started what he wanted to be the school of social work. And the first name of the Institute was Sir Dorabji Tata Graduate School of Social Work.

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And that name continued until we moved to the present campus. I'm not quite sure what time the name changed. But it changed to Tata Institute of Social Sciences which I felt conformed more to what the structure of the staff was. Though it was a school of social work, the faculty trained in social work was about 3 or 4.

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The rest of them were junior field work advisors and so on. The teaching faculty was not really qualified in social work. Dr Cama was a judge of the children's court. Dr. Masani was a part time psychiatrist who used to come and teach us.

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So in 1962 when I came here, it was a new campus which I had not seen and the faculty was limited because of the funds. There were only 6 faculty members. One year before I came, I had come as a member of a team which had come on behalf of

the UGC for granting the deemed university status to the Institute.

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I went back; the offer had come to me. I wrote to the UGC that since I will be joining as the Director, you better appoint another committee. So another committee under Professor Pawte from the Karnataka University, they came and visited and recommend that it may be recognized.

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The faculty problem continued because of lack of funds. Dr. Bannerji, Manu Desai, Dr. Mehta, Miss Mathew was at that time assisting Dr Bannerji. We had six teachers at that time and some additional staff and faculty assistants.

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Q: What was the number of students at that time?

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In 1962 when I came, about 40-45 students of social work approximately. And about 20 for Labour. Those were the two different specialisations. There were no specialisations among social work.

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Even personal management department went on changing its name as the fashion changed. It was originally Labor Welfare and Industry Relations, then Personnel Management and I don't know what its present name is.

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With time the challenges were different. When the Institute was started at the Nagapada Neighborhood House, there was really a job as a Labour Welfare Officer and the factories were required to employ them and it was an Act of the Bombay Assembly.

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So there was employment readily available, In fact my brother in law, when he suggested the Institute to me had that in mind. He said when you graduate from there you can go as a Labour Welfare Officer.

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Q: Given that Social Work was a profession that came in from the US, was there any concern about indigenising it?

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That was not a problem, Tata Institute was established by an American but our curriculum was totally different. It was focused on some principles of social work. Case work was not being taught. The American scene was dominated by case work. Group work came later and community organization at last.

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At the Tata Institute Dr. B. H. Mehta's main interest was community work. He was working in the Parsi colony and doing work with the residents. He had started a community centre. So that was his specialisation.

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Dr. Murthy had no such background in Social Work and his thesis was on the Hindu theory of War. So the people who really impressed me were the psychologist, Dr. Mukherji, he was a good teacher and I was interested in his subject.

Dr. Masani, he came and went as a part time lecturer. He was good. And once I discussed with him, "If I want to be a psychiatric practitioner, what should I do?" He said "You can't do it without being a doctor first. You can take a medical degree and then go into it."

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So I was rethinking what to do since I was not interested in becoming a labor officer. It occurred to me that I should specialize in some social science. I joined the Bombay University Department of Sociology. As I mentioned I happened to do well there and immediately I got an offer from the Delhi School of Social Work.

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Dr Kumarappa did not want many schools of Social Work to come up. It was not that he was afraid of competition; At least I don't think it was the case, but he thought we won't be able to maintain any standards. In any case, the Delhi School, the National YWCA of the United States, they wanted to start a school of social work here and Almaila Lucky came as the Director.

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Again like Dr. Manshardt, **Almaila Lucky** was too qualified in social work. She was qualified as a teacher. She had very good connections with the Ruckerfeller family. She was teaching at the teachers' college at Columbia.

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So her background was different. And her only claim to social work was that she happened to be in 1947 in Delhi when the refugees came on Partition. She worked with the refugees; she worked with Lady Mountbatten and gathered as she went along.

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A good deal of the Delhi School of Social Work was relating to refugee rehabilitation in terms of field work and also in terms of resettlement of a criminal colony. Those centres served as places where we could send our students.

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We also sent students to the welfare section of the Ministry of Rehabilitation. That was the kind of background when social work was developing. This notion that Indian Social work was modeled around the American, to my mind has no basis.

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Though Americans came and started these schools, they were not social workers. For the first time, sometime in the '60s, before I came to the Institute, the American embassy decided to send a group of five American social work teachers with Helen Wright as the head of the committee.

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And they were attached to different schools. I don't know what they had in mind but again the impact that they could make in terms of emphasizing social work, I'm not quite sure, was attained, except for one school - Baroda School which was started by Ms. Vakharia.

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She had full qualifications. She was my classmate in Tata Institute. But immediately after completing that she went to the States, did her qualification in social work and started the Baroda Faculty of Social Work.

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That you could say was the professional beginning of social work education. Even when I came to the Institute in 1962, Dr. Bannerji, Ms. Mathew, they were qualified in the Social Work casework. Prof. Kaikobad again had training in America when he came and he worked in the field of Group work and community development.

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So there was some beginning of specialisation in social work per se. The major conflict was between social work as a group and between Industrial relations. And

there was a much greater demand for industrial relations than for social work. Almost 1 to 3, the number of applications it would be.

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Initially we used to have only one selection committee. And we helped allocate seats according to available faculty. So we admitted, I think around 20 students for Industrial Relations and Labour Welfare and the rest of them for Social Work.

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That has now completely changed. In fact it changed by the time I retired. So the Institute has been responding to situations as they developed. And as the reputation of the Institute grew, more and more people came up with grants.

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When I was still the director, we first got a grant from the Ford Foundation. Before that, from... one of my friends, he was working with the International Council of Child Welfare, one of the UN international agencies. And he came and said, 'If we finance you, can you start a department in Child Welfare?'

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I said we are teaching child welfare but we don't have a specialized research person there. So he said, we will be willing to finance a research unit. So the first research unit was started with Ms. Khandekar as the head and Gopujkar as her assistant.

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Usha [Nayar] joined them. And then she came over to the faculty to teach child welfare. In course of time I went and talked to the UGC and said 'If we find people to take over the responsibilities for those units, our own Institute, would you be able to finance for three years?'

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Professor Jacob was at that time the Chairman of the UGC, he said 'Yes, I don't see, why not? There is a system of plan period, during which we will finance you. After that the continuation of that scheme, you'll have to undertake and you'll have to do it.'

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We were able to do it primarily because we became a part of the UGC network and the UGC followed the programme of providing plan funds and the continuation of the plan after the five years were over. That helped us and all the research units were started. They were started under this program.

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They got the UGC grant initially for a period of five years and then depending on the reports they consolidated. This idea of starting research units was mine. In the sense, even when I came to the Institute, I felt there were not enough social sciences, the social work programme was ok, and it had strengthened by that time. Though the number of teachers was 3 or 4.

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The total faculty when I came was 6. So I felt the Institute was called the Institute of Social Sciences and when I went to the University Department, they used to laugh saying, 'What social sciences are you doing?'

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When I came here, I sent a confidential letter note to our chairman Professor Choksi and I said "I'd like this kind of development, that we have departments of social work and units of research." He said, "This is a farfetched idea because we don't have the funds. But let's see, we'll keep it."

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Once we began to get grants from the UGC, the situation eased out because we were able to find funds for funding new units. So all the research units came because the funds became available from the UGC.

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The first unit, as I said, was financed not by the UGC but by the...I forget the... what was the agency called. There is a specialized UN agency for Child Welfare. That is how the expansion started taking place. With that developed insecurities.

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Quite naturally. I am emphasizing social sciences more than social work - is one group and I was hoping that social sciences and social work would kind of support each other. It did not happen. Not during the entire period that I was there.

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Both were maybe... Maybe social work was protective, maybe social sciences felt ill equipped because the nature of specialized fields of social work, you're required to know the field. And the social scientists we had had no experience in that.

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So in essence, I would say that I was not happy with the development. I was glad that research was being done. More and more funds came. The Institute was developing, it was getting a reputation. But I failed, you might say or the Institute failed to be able to bring these two streams together.

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And from my limited knowledge, I find that the situation continues today. That is actually the.. The solution now is that the school of social work is a different thing and social science is different. I don't necessarily regret it. But that is not what I had begun with.

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Q: Do you think there was any dialogue or cross fertilization between...

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There has not been. At the individual level maybe... there might have been, but I doubt it.

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Q: Were some of the social sciences people teaching social workers?

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Well, I was teaching sociology for some time until someone else came. Dr. K G Desai was teaching psychology. So it was.... psychology. As the psychology required by social work was being given through psychiatric social work, through case work. That is Dr. Bannerji, Grace Mathew, they were kind of helping develop that.

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But I never tried to organize seminars for the two together. But they were not at home. And even when I came to the Institute recently for this lecture, I met different groups. There were different groups. So from the point of view of strengthening social work through this, it has not happened. Social work has strengthened itself.

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I consider that Tata Institute School of Social Work is a strong unit. Because we have funds. Not Tata funds, not UGC funds. There are other schools of social work that have remained small institutions. Except the faculty in Baroda. But even that is a much smaller faculty now as compared to the Tata Institute faculty.

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That situation has not changed. I was associated with the development of many of these other schools. In the sense that when these schools were established. Invariably they would invite me with other members to examine the proposals, the Vice chancellor and so forth, Madras University, Jodhpur University.

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Whenever these new schools started, they asked committees to come and visit and in a way certify the programme. I found that they remained focused on social work and they did not have the funds for integrating social sciences. Maybe the idea is not workable, I don't know.

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Q: Could you talk about the development of specializations within social work and this whole debate of a generic program versus specializations?

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There was some debate at the Institute itself. Not formal, informal. Some teachers were not happy that we were training psychiatric social workers and medical social workers, family social workers. So if we had to find a place, we had to develop a specialisation .

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That was the idea. Though our degree may be in social work, they really went out with specialized experience in special fields. Except for those who went into community development. Some people went into Labour Welfare and did work under the Labour Act where the factories were required to employ social workers.

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But I don't in fact know clearly in my own head as to what integration would mean.

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Some schools of social work stuck to a generic program as opposed to TISS.

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Most schools except for Tata Institute, even the Baroda school. They focused on social work. The Tata Institute is the only one equipped to go into social sciences per se and have separate units there because within social sciences were several research units specializing in those fields.

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It is applied social sciences, not social sciences per se. So that someone who wants to

do sociology. He wouldn't do really well in Tata Institute. He should go to the University but applied social sciences- urban and rural research unit, then ageing unit, Sivaraju's, these kinds of units, I think are making a contribution in their own fields.

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Whether they are contributing to social sciences, I think, yes, but maybe I'm biased.

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Q: In a way, this whole idea of interdisciplinarity has become fashionable of late but Tata Institute had the idea under your guidance much earlier. Would you want to talk a little about that?

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The point is, if there is any interdisciplinarity, it is more at the Institute because they have more of a faculty. The other schools of social work do not have a strong social science faculty. Growth of schools of social work has been dependent on Labour Welfare. Most of these other schools, the students came to them because of the demand for labour and personnel management.

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They didn't call them specializations so personnel management and labour welfare became a part of the social work curriculum. And then of course, they teach case work, but then it is not taught by teachers who have specialized in case work.

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So case work, group work, community organization those subjects remain... those subjects are not developed. Grace Mathew did a lot of work in case work and tried to develop an Indian kind of case work. Also because of Dr. Bannerji's efforts in Family welfare in Worli. Grace also started a psychiatric... I was President of that organisation, to advise people with psychiatric problems.

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There was an Association of Friends of the Mentally Ill, that right. As the Director, Dr. Bannerji wanted me to be the Chairman of that. Though I had no special qualifications for it. Then after her Grace took over that work. That work, I would say is professional.

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But the community development work did not grow to the same extent. It became confused all the time with working in Labour chawls. The pattern for us was determined by the work that Dr. Mehta used to do in the Parsi colonies and their effort

was to do partly recreational work, partly not clinical work but primarily recreational work in the community.

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Panwalkar came. He summoned some people. They wanted to do more in terms of community development which meant that work you do not only on the play ground but went into the families. How far they succeeded I can't say because most of the development took place after I left.

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Q: Could you talk a little about the time when the Institute became a deemed University. Could you talk a little about your efforts to systematize the curriculum to bring it into an MA programme framework?

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Well, first structurally we made a few additions. We added an Academic Council apart from the Governing Board which was a decision making body administratively. For the development of the academic content of the Institute programme, we thought, at least that was my idea that we should have an Academic Council.

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You see the Institute did not have a formal constitution as an Institute. So that was done after I came and in this Prof. Choksi was also involved. He suggested that we have an academic council on which all of the professors, designations wise, some group of readers, some from the lecturers were well presented so that they had different generations in essence on the academic council.

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Every discipline, every department would be represented. Additionally, Prof. Choksi suggested that we have two or three people from outside and they would work as members of the academic council. In the first group I remember, we had Dr. Balsara there. You know about him. He used to be Deputy Municipal Commissioner.

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He was the first Honorary General Secretary of the Annual Social Work Council. I worked under him. Chatterji and I. He was on our Academic Council. Natrajan had never done field work but he was a journalist and wrote about what is now considered broadly social concerns and so on.

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Both of them, they used to come every month for the meeting. It helped in the sense

that we couldn't just fly away with anything. One constraint was the resources available to the Institute. The other was what would be the legitimate for us to do.

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and I think the establishment of the Academic Council gave a structure. The Governing board was always these to give approval or not. Then I also encouraged individual departments to have their own consultative bodies so that the department of family welfare, they had three or four persons, but it was not on the individual head who has contributed.

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Dr. Bannerji, Miss Mathew, Mary Lobo were working together. Similarly Mrs. Desai and one or two were working with her. I forget now. Meenakshi Apte. We had one more. Because when Meenakshi became the head she expanded the work quite a lot into the field.

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Both in terms of not so much research but service oriented. She worked with the police. The counseling of the police personnel and people, children taken over by the police, that kind of work she focused on. She made quite a contribution in the field.

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Manu Desai was the head originally and she continued until her period of retirement and Meenakshi was the second under her. Well I was happy with what we were able to do. It did not become a social science Institute without reference to the problems of the people. Nor did it become a casework oriented or group work oriented institution like the American Schools.

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My wife went to the New York School of Social Work. In fact I also went there initially and one of the Professors there advised me that what you're looking for, you won't get here. She said that you better go to the University, Department of Sociology.'

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I was very keen to specialize in research methods. And I got the opportunity of my life working in Columbia when Prof. Merton, held joint seminars and I was able to attend and listen to them, participate in them and so on.

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And because of my teaching experience here, I found that they gave me special

facilities, to take courses which normally they wouldn't have allowed a first year student to take. So that helped me a great deal in terms of my own development.

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How far it contributed to the Institute... that was before I came here.. and that was when I was at the Delhi School of Social Work. I went to the US. After I came here I went to the US for committee meetings but not really for anything else.

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Q: As someone who has worked both in social work and social sciences, how would you ideally see the linkages between these two. You did speak about how they tended to go on separate trajectories but how would you see the possibilities?

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The thing is that you can have a research unit. It won't become inter disciplinary unless the person who heads it and assists him, they come from different disciplines and interact. Then the research that they undertake will to that extent then become inter disciplinary.

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Now obviously this can't happen everywhere. But wherever it happened, I think it has helped. Because I had that advantage of combining such social work training as was available then and of course specialise on my own, going and taking sociology here and then again in the States, and my interest was research so I tried to continue with that and a number of projects came to the Institute because of that.

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The first major project that came to us was Sociology of Education. Then after that several projects came. They got divided into different units in course of time. So Family Studies went somewhere else, Women's Welfare went somewhere else but that was natural.

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But the kind of combination that I had, I would not say that that was ideal or anything, but just by chance that combination. Ramchandran had both, specialised training in research and he was also a social work trained person.

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Prof Neurath had come here for a short period, he was very unhappy in India because social workers were not responding. Ramachandran responded. So Neurath worked with Ramachandran and Ramachandran developed a strong research unit at the

Institute. This could not happen at other schools of social work. They did not have the personnel resources nor of course the... being a part of the University a number of questions arise. We had the advantage of being independent and also better access to funds.

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Q: As a person of eminence in both social work and social sciences, what is your self image?

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Its not a question of what I would like, I have worked in both the fields. I have not done as much work in social work as I have done in social sciences. That's a fact. Because as the Director, I couldn't have done much. Research I could do. Because you had funds, you could employ people and do research and write about them. In terms of what I could do myself, I was able to develop much more research at the Institute as well as promote the idea of social research. To my own benefit, I happened to be appointed the chairman of the Indian Council of Social Sciences Research. That made a world of a difference. Because I came in contact with all the eminent social scientists.

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I had to preside over the meetings, That was unexpected because the first chairman was Dr. Gargi, very eminent social scientist. After that I didn't expect, I was among the committee that planned the Indian Council of Social Science Research. Dr. Gargi, myself and Mr Joshi. We were the committee that drafted the framework for the Indian Council of Social Science Research. But after Prof Rao left, I was appointed.

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It was not easy for me because though I was quite confident about my qualifications in social sciences but I was known as a social work Director so I was not sure how the others would take it, other members. Fortunately I had good colleagues. I spent six years there which meant I don't know whether good or bad, I brought in new points of view but at the same time I gave a lot of my time, which should have been at the Institute, to work outside the Institute. In fact during the six years I was the chairman of ICSSR I limited my work at the Institute to three days a week.

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And two days I spent in Delhi and I told the member secretary to arrange all the meetings on those two days. I said I can't come on other days. I didn't have much teaching responsibility. I used to teach only sociology which was taken up by the general group in the first year. Then just to make some sense of me being there, I

started teaching Industrial Sociology for which I had no special qualifications. I had done no work in that field. But I was teaching that. In course of time I began to tell the students to teach themselves.

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I had developed a system. There was a small group at that time- 30 students. So I divided the syllabus and gave one chapter each and said, you read the text books and come and present to the class what you have to say about that subject.

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So all the 30 students were made to present some paper and in essence it became a self learning process of them and made a less of a demand for me. But that is how it was. I think a lot of responsibility outside the Institute, first with the ICSSR, then later Prof Rao was the Education Minister. He made me become member of the executive council of the BHU. I said, "It's too far". He said, "No you must take it." It meant I left one evening, spent a night in Delhi and took the morning flight to Benaras. There was no direct flight from Bombay to Benaras. It was a drag on my time but I learnt a lot about Universities, the problems they had.

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But I had the opportunity of working with Hridya Nath Kundru, Mr. Khosla who was the judge of the High court in Punjab, so I got a lot out of it. How much I contributed it's difficult to say. It was during that period while I was there having lunch with the Vice Chancellor, along with the other members that the news broke, that Emergency had been proclaimed. And I said, "What is Emergency? What exactly does it mean?"

0:17:03.518

And everyone was silent. No one would talk. I realized later that I was too innocent to get the significance. Anyway I think my years at the Institute enriched my life in many ways. I hope I have given at least that much to the Institute.

Q: Could you talk about the first national conference of social workers that you were involved in organising?

00:00:04,959 --> 00:00:43,398

I'll talk about it but I have written it in more detail in my memoirs. The idea of organising such a conference was Mr. B Chatterji's. We were class mates and he said why not work and I said okay. So we started then we had Dr. Kumarappa as the Chairman of the organising committee. I had no idea how a conference is organised.

00:00:43,398 --> 00:01:09,789

Chatterji told me that we need to have an organising committee. We need to have a Chairman, a General Secretary. And the structure of having a committee with Chatterji and I as Joint Secretaries of that committee and Dr. Kumarappa as the chairman.

00:01:09,789 --> 00:01:54,158

Then we needed a General Secretary then Dr. Kumarappa suggested that we approach Dr. Balsara. Dr. Balsara was a sociologist by discipline and background. He was the Municipal Commissioner so he was aware of the problems in the city and so on. He was not a social worker per se. But being an experienced man and the programming was done primarily by the two of us and other social workers who happened to be our friends.

00:01:54,158 --> 00:02:39,518

So the idea was initiated by professional social workers but we wanted to bring the professional and the non professional persons working in the field of social work together. There was always this unarticulated conflict and the non professional social workers, those who were not taking jobs; they were people who belonged to the higher social strata.

00:02:39,518 --> 00:03:29,679

They were members of committee and so on and when we called a conference we wanted to bring them in and also professional social workers and establish a greater rapport between the two. Initially in the first conference I think the idea worked. What we did was that the Chairman of each section would be an eminent voluntary social worker but the recording secretary was a professional.

00:03:29,679 --> 00:03:57,078

And that way, an acceptable relationship both to the volunteer as well as the other started, because it opened up opportunity as for professionals to meet voluntary social workers outside their individual institutions. It also brought a greater appreciation of what the contribution of a professional social worker might be.

00:03:57,078 --> 00:04:28,239

Otherwise the volunteers used to treat the qualified social worker as another member of the staff and not someone who can make contribution. I think we succeeded in bringing not only the professional workers and the volunteers but also different groups among the volunteers together.

00:04:28,2 --> 00:05:08,239

There was an organization like the Women's conference. There were organisations

religion wise, Jains and Lingayats, different groups. There were problem focused organizations like Child Welfare, people who are physically handicapped and so on. They never knew anything about what other people were doing. Coming on to a common platform helped them get an understanding of each other.

00:05:08,2 --> 00:05:41,319

It also helped the professional social workers to get some kind of an understanding of what the expectations of the volunteers are. They wanted social leadership, it was very clear. But apart from that what was it that would really help them and to give those people an understanding of what contribution they professional would make.

00:05:41,319 --> 00:06:25,718

I think if you take a ten year review, it largely succeeded in doing what we were out to do. And after that period in essence it was becoming redundant. So the same subjects or new subjects might be taken up. In any case after the first conference I became member of the faculty of the Delhi school and I couldn't give as much time as Chatterji could.

00:06:25,718 --> 00:07:18,878

So Chatterji became the paid executive secretary of the Conference of Social Work established as a result of the first meeting. How far it has helped practice of social work, I can't say. It has in applied form, from which the professionals were projected on a much wider scale than what wouldn't have been possible otherwise. It has given professional an understanding of what the expectations of the volunteers is apart from being member of the committees and so on.

00:07:18,878 --> 00:08:02,878

And there were some who are not professionals but who made commitments much beyond what a voluntary worker would do. One of them was Mary Clubwala Azad from Madras. She had established the Guild of Service and when the first conference was held, she came with a troop of social workers, all the members of the guild. She liked the experience of participating in the conference. She said she wanted to have the next conference in Madras.

00:08:02,878 --> 00:08:24,919

We were very happy because it meant that the conference will go on. So the second conference was held in Madras. I wasn't present because I was in the States. The third conference was held in Delhi and I was the Honorary Secretary and Dr. Kundru was the chairperson.

00:08:24,919 --> 00:09:04,999

So it served the purpose of establishing a greater understanding. After about ten years I think it had served its purpose and there was much greater awareness certainly about the profession but also about social work per se. You see even earlier before the conference, even the work of the volunteers was not known to the people. The conference projected and the members of the conference came from all over the country.

00:09:04,999 --> 00:09:40,158

And the attendance, for the first conference about 400, after that about 300 people. Later on it started out and so on. And then well it had its own natural... I don't know if it exists now maybe it does. But the purpose with which it started was not clearly spelt out in our mind at that time, I think was served in this.

00:09:40,158 --> 00:10:13,398

As someone who has been associated with social work profession from the 1940s across several decades, do you see any changes that have taken place over the period of time. Both in social work education as well as professional social work. Have there been any major shifts?

00:10:13,398 --> 00:11:12,278

When we were students at the Tata Institute, the curriculum was unstructured. Partly because none of the teachers were social workers, so each one came and talked about psychology, about something else, whatever they were specialized in. But it happened with the first Institute to set a model. Last that I knew when I was still there, there were more than 30-40 schools of social work and now there are more. I was directly involved in the establishment of a few, consolidation of some, because I had been the head of the oldest one.

00:11:12,278 --> 00:12:04,479

I did not have this view that we should monopolise. It couldn't be done in a country like ours. And the image of the profession being so important... And maybe that was my shortcoming from the point of few of some others because I was both a social scientist and a social worker. I think the social work profession initially focused upon labour welfare but over a period of time it has spread in many fields.

00:12:04,479 --> 00:12:26,318

As a result of the work done by faculty of the schools of social work in different parts the idea that this is a profession, that you need training for this, this idea is now accepted. Not necessarily always welcomed by volunteers but it is accepted.

00:12:26,318 --> 00:12:55,679

So I would say to that extent the starting of the conference, we called it a council but it was really a conference. In course of time it became redundant. I don't know whether it exists, I think not.

00:12:55,679 --> 00:13:17,718

Q: As someone who has spent so many years with social work and social sciences, is there any message you would like to give students of social work? Something based on your own experience?

00:13:17,718 --> 00:13:47,479

I am in favour of specialisations but I want students to get out of specialisations in the sense that their mind should be open and they should be social workers and not medical social workers and psychiatric social workers. That specialisation is necessary for developing the discipline. But the work in the community is not organized to suit their needs or to suit their skills.

00:13:47,479 --> 00:14:49,359

And to be useful to the community they must have a wider perspective. And while the profession has established itself... Social work is still not becoming an autonomous volunteer field. In fact over the years it has become more and more government dependent and though I was never a member of it, but the Central Social Welfare Board strengthened social work. But it also meant that it was the pattern and the focus was on women and children.

0:14:49,359 --> 00:15:27,119

And the other fields did not get because Durga V. Deshmukh did not have that background and she did not have the funds either to attend to all the fields so it became a women focused organization. All the members mostly women focusing on women and child welfare. The other problems did not get...When I was appointed the chairman of a committee on aftercare, at that time the idea of aftercare was absent.

00:15:27,119 --> 00:16:08,799

I was not aware of it myself, after I became the Chairman, I started studying it. What happens to the children that go out of institutions? What happens to women when they go out of institutions? There is a need for a bridge between the life in a community and institutionalised life from which the children go. And Mr. Bhat was the Chairman of the Children's Aid committee in Chembur. He was the member. Mrs. Zada was of course a very well known social worker.

00:16:08,799 --> 00:16:50,278

So I think we pooled our experience and questioned this idea that while specialisation is important, awareness of the broader needs of the community and the contribution that you can make to it, that has to be kept in mind. In professions we organise around specialisations but the field is not organised like that. There is a need for medical social workers to work. But if a medical social worker who doesn't know the need of the community outside cannot function.

00:16:50,278 --> 00:17:46,879

To bring relief to your patient, you have to know the community and the facilities available there. So I think that consciousness has come. That is generalisation in the midst of specialisation. Specialisation is required for developing professional expertise but the general context you can't function the field without that. I don't think there is anything much more..

00:17:46,879 --> 00:17:58,879

Q: There is one more issue which is of personal interest to us which is, the role that you played in starting our centre... the media unit and your association with Mr. Tendulkar.

00:17:58,879 --> 00:18:38,399

I remember the background; I think you had not yet joined. You joined while I was still there but the work that Tendulkar did... First he documented his Nehru Fellowship through the study of criminals. Then when we met, I said, this kind of work needs to be done, documenting and I would like to find out, who could do it.

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At the spur of the moment he said, 'I'll do it'. I said, 'Are you sure?' He said yes. I said, "We don't pay much. I can only invite you as a visiting Professor. And we'll pay about 2000 rupees." So first he bought an ordinary camera. Then they had a small 8 mm movie camera. With that he did some work for one year. By that time you had come I think. Or he had suggested this idea that there should be media unit. And Ms. Desai was then the Director. I had just retired.

00:19:28,6 --> 00:20:07,759

And Ms. Desai, she took the initiative and developed the Unit. I think at that point you joined. I'm happy about that. Unfortunately I have never been able to visit the unit and see the work that you had done. Once before you had told me to come and see but every time it has been in hurry and I haven't been able to enter your unit and see.