



Prof. Meenakshi Apte

Interviewer: Prof. Anjali Monteiro

Camera: Prof. KP Jayasankar

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Professor Meenakshi Apte is a retired Professor and former Head of the Department of Family and Child Welfare, TISS. She is the founder President of Swadhar IDWC, Pune. She is a Fulbright scholar and the recipient of many awards. She is on the Board of renowned national and International organizations. She has initiated several pioneering field action projects in TISS. She is an alumna of TISS, graduating in 1967. She joined the faculty of the Institute in 1967 and retired in 1994.



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Q: Mrs. Apte could you talk about how you joined as a student of TISS and what brought you to TISS, to begin with...

MA: Okay, see I must tell you that I passed my BA and also MA from University of Pune, and around 1954 I joined Central Social Welfare Board. First in Satara district as one of the community organizations. So at that time there used to be welfare extension projects, I met Mrs. Deshmukh at Pandarpur when she visited Nawrangekbai asharam, and there she introduced lots of ideas, when she was addressing the public meeting. I had an opportunity to meet her, and this is how I went to Satara district. Phaltan. From there I was promoted later on to Bombay office, at that time it was not Maharashtra State, but Bombay State Social Welfare Board. And Maharashtra districts, Gujarat and Karnataka, that was the formation. It was prior to states reorganization.

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MA: And after marriage I decided, because I was simply social science student, I didn't have social work degree. So in between, around 1965 I took leave and decided to join Tata Institute of Social Sciences, this is how I had about twelve years active working experience in district, state level, and also at central social welfare board in Delhi. So it was very proper time for me to join the institute, and having experience was very unique. I was unique student when I came to the institute.

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Q: So given that you came with a lot of field experience, how did you feel about the education at TISS, the teachers, the interaction with other students?

MA: See, very fortunately I must mention that I had an opportunity to work with three four distinguished women; one was Mrs. Durgabai Deshmukh who was the Chairman central social welfare board. After her Mrs. Sachamma Mathai, John Mathai's wife. She also was first state board chairman and later on central board chairman. Then in between I spent one year with Tarabai Modak at Kosbad, I was staying there, working with tribal children because I wanted to have first hand experience. And there was Pushpaben Mehta who was Saurashtra assembly chairman before states reorganisation, and she had headed at that time the suicide enquiry committee.

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MA: So with these four ladies I had lot of interaction and in my early years I had a great opportunity to work with these ladies. So this is how it was very unique experience, and whatever is worldly wisdom that these women have, that taught me much more, later on it added to my academic education.

Q: So what did you feel about education in Tata Institute when you came as a student?

MA: No, I find it very useful you see, because though you work at various levels it is only a typical type of work whatever that agency is doing. When you undergo academic education you get lots of...it is like medical education for example, right from gynecology to ophthalmology, you see MBBS student is introduced. That really helps you to decide for yourself what is good for you and what you like. So I do think that it is very useful experience you see.



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Q: Do you recall anything memorable about your student days, about your interaction with your professors?

MA: Yes, first of all my student days were very hectic because I used to stay at Andheri, and at that time there were no buses coming to...several times I used to miss Tata Institute bus at Dadar station and it was really difficult for me to reach in time. And Dr. Gore's used to be first period you see, so I was always late for his classes, reaching. Anyhow, he would simply laugh at me. That is one thing that I should remember. Later on Dr. Banerjee, Mrs. Desai, these were very important teachers in my life you see, in their own way they were very good fieldworkers, and they created interest in field. And whatever we were studying in classes, at that time there were not enough agencies, few were providing that kind of experience, so later on when I joined the institute that was an opportunity for us too. Because whenever students wanted, say for example marital discord, where were the agencies dealing with? There were deserted women and women's problems and that kind of issues but as a technique, marriage counseling or therapeutic work and all that, so these students were reading in the books but not getting experience.

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MA: So this is how many agencies we had to develop and particularly I was in the department of family and child welfare. That time the departmental organization was somewhat different from what is today. And there were no agency workers to supervise at that time; we had to undertake that work. So that's how we decided to develop good agency base through students' efforts. There used to be the fundraising programme of department of child and family welfare, about 1 lac rupees we were annually raising, through which the salaries of two social workers were paid



to voluntary agencies. This is how we developed at least twenty to twenty five agencies in Bombay. Depending on our needs you see.

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Q: So you were talking of the lack of...

MA: Yes, the lack of fieldwork agencies, and also the lack of Indian records you see, and also lack of Indian records because many books used to be either American or British and there wasn't Indian experience and Indian landscape in our reading.

MA: That also simultaneously when I joined, Mrs. Desai was still in the institute and you must have heard of Frances Yasas, so she introduced the idea of using creative literature written by well known authors in India and making use of that literature in our teaching. So this is how we got introduced to many creative writers, this is how we came in contact with Mr. Tendulkar, and later on he joined the institute as one of the visiting professors. But that experience for five-six years was very enriching because I must mention who were prominent people who contributed you see, at least to my education. One was Mr. Tendulkar, the other person was well known communist worker...

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MA: ...I have already mentioned you see. Then GP Pradhan who was member of the assembly but he was my professor at Fergusson College, similarly Devadutta Dabholkar, Chitratai Naik, some of these people in whose contact I used to be always and they contributed to my reading, and professor Gore. So I enriched there while working itself you see.

Q: As a student, given that you were much older than the other students, how did you feel?



MA: No, it was very good experience for me because I had come with experience, but at the same time having young students around is always useful. They very well accepted me you see and that also helped me to adapt to their expectations in my attitudes. That helped me as a teacher because I got socialized in Tata Institute, first as a student who was an adult, and then as a faculty who was an experienced person, you see.

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Q: Could you talk about the time when you joined as a teacher, and specifically we'd like you to talk about the setting up of various very important field action projects...

MA: Action projects I tell little later, but I like institute very much because of the freedom that the teachers enjoy you see. Because I experienced every unique type of freedom in the institute. And there wasn't the academic council which was sitting somewhere else, or the policy making ;we ourselves were involved in formation of curriculum, so that is very unique about Tata Institute. It is not existent in other universities. Secondly, as I told you I'm Puna University student, but Tata Institute has open library, so that also is very...nowhere universities have that kind of direct access to students. And then facilities like Xeroxing and all which were not existent in other universities. Institute was always ready to provide such facilities, so I liked that. And teachers freedom I very much liked you see.

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Q: Could you talk a little about how you joined as a teacher. Was it soon after your graduation, or after...

MA: At that time many of us like Ms. Matthew or Mr. Ramchandran or Mrs. Panakal, we never



joined directly as lecturer. We were faculty assistants, many of us. So that was basically field work. First two years I spent as faculty assistant, then I became lecturer, reader, professor, later on. But that also gave me enough time to adjust myself to the institute, so I was not directly exposed to students as a lecturer. I was exposed as a fieldwork supervisor and a kind of guide, so I developed that kind of relationship, and my relationship with students used to be very close you see. I don't know why but perhaps it could be my own personality that warmth students gave me, I exchange that warmth with students.

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Q: Is there anything memorable you remember as a teacher?

MA: Yes, because Tata Institute we never have holidays for teachers, we have to take leave, so there wasn't Diwali vacation or summer vacation for teachers. And my family members used to wonder, particularly my mother ki yeh kaisa tumhara college hai? You see, why other teachers get chutti and why you don't get that kind of break? So that also very unique about it. Nowadays university rules may be similar like Tata Institute, but at that time about fifty years back it was not so you see. Many colleges or university teachers may teach and go away, they are not available to teachers, and Tata institute teachers are always available to students, that is very unique about Tata institute.

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Q: Could you talk about field action projects?

MA: Okay. So Field Action Projects I mentioned to you earlier, it was the need. Because many students, for example a student would come and say she is interested in sexually abused children.



Where to get sexually abused children? Because they have raised something in the stated weekly because at that time Khushwant Singh was bringing out these kind of issues you see, on special issues of Illustrated Weekly and I Watch and child sexual abuse and these kind of subjects, I want this kind of experience. We had to look for and search for these kind of agencies or wherever there was any gap, start the work ourselves. So most of us were very busy you see. The team that was working with us with new ideas and new atmosphere for students. So this is how we started with adoption work, foster care work in Bapnu ghar, later on the family court work, then domestic violence work with police. Later on, before I retired I had not worked with women prisoners but I was on one or two prison committees as visitor, but after my retirement I also started work at Yerwada prison you see, where long term prisoners are staying here. So their problems particularly with their children and family, women are not easily accepted back by the family, so there are lots of problems you see for women prisoners.

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MA: That nobody comes to visit them, they don't get a proper lawyer, don't go to higher courts, even if they have full right to approach the higher court. So this kind of work everybody had experienced, it's not me alone, but whosoever has worked with me, you can find out Anjali and many other people, Ashutosh, Nalini Nair, Medha Patkar was our student.

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Q: Can you talk a little more in detail about each of these specific, like the family court work, how did it start and...

MA: Okay, so as you know 1975 was international women's year. And during that year lot of



activities were taking place. Equality report was out you see, it was government towards equality. And there was a demand made for family court you see, but there were no courts existing. So when we started reading about it we realised that there is need of this kind of machinery which advises the people in marital discord, with proper advice, counseling, if necessary guidance and all sorts of therapeutic work that we have read or worked with, you see. So in '77 there was amendment in Hindu Marriage Act made because family court is... you must be knowing that we do not have common civil law, so each community is ruled by its own laws and this Hindu marriage act was providing that court must make an effort to give them counseling, find out what is the real reason. So I happened to meet a judge and he asked me we don't know now this new recommendation has come for us but we don't know whom to approach because we are not equipped to do this work. So I suggested four names, including Tata institute, Nirmala Niketan, nagpada neighbourhood house and family service centre you see. These four agencies in my opinion were suitable to start this kind of work, but others did not respond, so from Tata institute we responded because we had this family welfare fund collected by students. And so it was like a tailor made fund.

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MA: And then we started with two counselors Bhageshri Parikh and Mrs. Gheewalla, you see, and we requested Bombay High Court that this should be part of, integral part of high court, or court machinery . Because whenever we write the letter to a client nobody will respect you see Tata Institute letter, and we are calling and you come and meet us so there has to be stamp from city civil court or whichever court is dealing with that kind of case. So there should be a centre in the court itself, doesn't matter if you don't give us money but at place you must give, typing and



other such facilities you must give. Telephone of course has to be provided by the court and this is how we started in 1977 and we were supposed to give report to the high court because there is administrative machinery of the court, so they were trying to see what are the results. And results were very good you see. About 35 percent settlement of cases before going to hearing you see.

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MA: I should explain to you what is settlement you see, whether they want to contest or whether they want to amicably resolve which parent should have custody of a child, how much money the husband can give to wife, where she will stay, is he willing to cooperate for her separation and all these processes. So this was very comfortable for the court and we used to go with readymade discussion and records that which party is willing to compromise and accepting you see whatever suggestions we have made. So even reaching to the decision to take divorce was in my opinion was a correct... it was resolving the case. Because if you are not getting well what is the point in just carrying on with conventional marriage you see, just for sake of marriage.

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MA: So in 1984 the act was passed, 1984 Family Court Act, and the course got started in 1987, and four places were selected. At that time some of the important judges were Mrs. Sujata Manohar, then KT Bam, Justice Pratap, Justice Deshpande, a number of distinguished people of Bombay high court who were administrative in charge you see. And Bombay, Pune, Nagpur and Aurangabad. Then question came that how many counselors per judge. In Bombay for example, eight judges are appointed you see, because Bombay at that time was having six thousand cases annually to handle. So then each judge should be assisted by two councilors, this is how



everywhere two counselors for each judge. About fifty counselors were recruited for all these four cities.

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MA: Why these four cities? Because the act itself says that the population of the city should be ten lakhs, or more. Now there are many more cities ready, Thana, Amaravati, Kolhapur, Solapur, Meeraj, , Sangli, number of cities are now more than ten lakhs and many more courts are required. So maybe in next twenty five years every district will have a court you see. Why family court? Idea is that if it is part of a general court then it used to take three years to come a case for hearing. Then litigation, both party lawyers contesting each other's claims, so it used to take seven eight ten years. And while the age is not at the advantage you see. So unlike property matters or other matters, this is very crucial that it has to be resolved quickly and so special court. Like in the state court or tribunal. And initially people were very angry because lawyer is not allowed to be available in the court, it is counselor and judge, but now many courts are allowing. And I believe eight states have accepted family courts you see.

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MA: Most of the South Indian states like Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, I don't know whether Andhra has accepted or not, but Gujarat, Rajasthan, U.P., these are the states which have accepted. But somehow West Bengal has not accepted so far. Jyoti Basu opened the Kolkata Family Court, but lawyers did not allow to, it to function you see. So that is experience, and then when we realised that many women did not want divorce or custody of children but there was lot of violence in marriage, so this is how the police office got started. Mr. Rebeiro once came for a



lecture for some IAS officers to Tata Institute and he was saying that we get several complaints of the women having domestic violence but again we don't have a machinery to deal with. So this is how with two workers in Crawford market office, the work got started. Now it is replicated in all districts of Maharashtra. Everywhere there are minimum two workers, but Pune, Bombay there are many more workers you see.

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MA: And our workers are waiting that they want to be a part of permanent police machinery, it is still not there you see. Anjali's working hard for that you see. So this is how the domestic violence work got. Side by side women's movement also was expanding, so we have joined hands with women's groups because there are many women's groups who have emerged, and there is lot of link, you see, amongst each other. So lot of facilities now are, even government is aware, international bodies are aware, laws are changing, so this is how the domestic violence work got started. Adoption, foster care everywhere you see, because Dr. Desai was very much interested in developing adoption work, foster care work. Leena Kashyap at that time was working in Bapnughar and incharge of foster care work. So this is how many child welfare activities, side by side developed you see.

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Q: What do you think have been the implications of these projects, particularly the work of the Special Cell and the Family Court work, or status of women?

MA: See, I must tell you, we should go back to Durgabai Deshmukh, because when she was planning commission member, side by side she was central board chairman also you see. And



her task as planning commission member was to look at manpower planning. And she used to argue with Dr. C.D. Deshmukh, that you think of manpower, but how about women power, because for many jobs there is the need to have women workers you see. Except nurses you haven't visualised special jobs for women. That created something in myself, my own thinking that most of these jobs are likely to be for women you see and intelligent women students of Tata Institute really take very good interest in all these development of activities which are otherwise neglected you see. Because the salaries are comparatively low in these fields so male students are not coming forward.

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MA: But women power is definitely available for such jobs you see. And many of our students have distinguished themselves in various fields which need attention.

Q: Specifically the special cell and the work in the family courts has...

MA: No even adoption work, foster care work, child sexual abuse work, you name a work and most of these workers you will find women, and they are job wise or salary wise, they are somewhat less than their male counterparts you see, who are working in community field or international jobs.

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Q: One is of course that women are working in these projects or in these initiatives, but in terms of, the clients are also women in many cases so do you...

MA: Yes that right. Women and children really benefit you see because of these workers who are available now. And many have started even private practice in counseling and maybe after 25



years this will develop as a special field for private practice.

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Q: Would you say that all classes of women access these services or...

MA: Oh yes, yes. Because there is shortage of services, say for example Swadhar has a Bombay branch, so even women working in Reserve Bank or at very high officials when they are not getting proper help from anybody, because they feel that nobody's willing to listen to them properly, because family pressure is there not to go to court, not to break the marriage, so they are struggling. So first few years go in just to see conflict within themselves. What to do? Should I go or should I not go? So they need somebody's help you see, to arrive at a proper decision. And what we don't read in western literature is Mother-in-law issue, dowry issue, bride burning; these are very much Indian issues you see. Such cases are not there you see. There may be other violent behavior but drowning of a daughter-in-law or killing of a daughter-in-law...

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Q: To what extent do you think social work education has sort of responded to these issues or included them in the curriculum or...

MA: Yes yes, but I feel now there is a need to have more and more orientation to management also you see because our problems are quite big. When you are working at single agency level it's alright, but when you are conducting a large programme, say for example the domestic violence at police level, then you need people at various higher levels, so you need kind of management, discipline, more of knowledge about laws, therapeutic work, so both ways you see therapeutic as well as developmental issue, and strengthening the women themselves is also a



main job for these workers you see. So right from school I realized that we have to resocialise the girl child, because she's always taught to do certain things and not to do certain things, and when she starts questioning why I can't do these things because while she's in school she reads that she's equal citizen of the state. So why I can't do this? Kyoki voh ek shapath rehti hai textbooks mein, main Bharat ka nagrik hun, meri yeh zimmedariyan hein, aisa har ek text book par oath hai, bacchon ki. So girl child is questioning that oath.

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Q: If you were to look back and evaluate the contribution of something like the special cell to changing these kinds of attitudes to girl child or to women or to patriarchy, how would you...

MA: No, for example if we're talking about social work education or institutes role in it, I think institute has big role because we are in a development stage now as nation, and many Asian countries are looking at us. During my tenure we had conducted several courses for UNICEF, ILO, for their officers, because such countries don't have training schools, so along with training the manpower for India, we also have to train manpower for neighboring states. And there has to be some kind of inter-country knowledge. Suppose I'm conducting a training course for Ethiopia then I must know Ethiopian laws and what that worker must be thinking in that context of their law situation, isn't it. So it has not remained local, it is becoming more and more global also.

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MA: For some people, I'm not saying for everybody. And there are several issues you see, for example medium of instruction, English is the language available for all students, but if I say that our education will be in Marathi, our own students will not have jobs available in Gujarat or in



Karnataka you see. So these are some of the dilemmas before the education, but it has its own role and newer issues will start coming.

Q: As a teacher within Tata Institute what do you think was your major contribution? What did you enjoy, what did you do...?

MA: No my contribution is particularly in these field activities and strengthening of field work which is excellent part of Tata Institute education. It's very important you see because there are several teachers, who are involved in research, and probably I couldn't conduct a lot of research you see, but everything is not to be done by everybody. And one thing I have learnt from Dr. Bannerjee, she used to say that look you see, when you see a big church it is not built overnight, many generations have taken part in it. So when you are doing it be committed to your own judgments and don't get drawn by something else's work. You must decide for yourself, and certainly next generation will benefit with your efforts you see. Because whatever good you see abroad, somebody has created it, somebody's efforts have gone in it, that's why they are better. So why can't we also make things better for our society, for our students, for our...

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MA: So even teaching methods at the institute has lot of scope you see, it's not just bookish education, it's very much field oriented education. Because those students who have language difficulties, at least I used to give them assignments, go and meet two leprosy patients and present in the class. Suppose if student has difficulty in reading with book then you have a live book before you, find out from him what are his difficulties and present. Because there were some students coming from Baba Amte's Institution and there were adivasi boys you see, not exposed to Bombay, not exposed to bigger library, and every time they used to have difficulties.



So I said that you have learnt number of things from Baba Amte, try to bring them, so you are not afraid of meeting leprosy patient, go and meet and present his case in class in a forceful way.

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MA: Similarly for his group work he was assigned a school and usually students undertake play activities and that kind of group work, but he took planting of trees in a school campus. Now the trees are big you see, and that school remembers this particular student, that it was his effort that this plantation of trees has taken place, with the help of students. So paryavaran, the nature, all these are very essential subjects you see, that need to be introduced apart from whatever are human suffering. The development issues are very important also. Protecting our air, water, land, vayu, sabh you see, we are nowadays reading ki sabh ki chori ho rahi hai.

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Q: What do you think are the kind of changes that have taken place in social work education from the time you were a student to the time you left the institute?

MA: No, now you see for example many new areas are added, short term courses got started, evening courses got started, degree course got started at the institute particularly rural campus, so it is certainly needed. So, it is expanding in all directions, high, low, horizontal you see. It is happiness you see. Because this is one of the criticisms on deemed universities, that they were too small, not catering to needs of larger group of students. There are some deemed universities where there are only thirty nine students, I don't want to name the institute you see.

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Q: So how would you assess Tata Institute's contribution to society, specifically if you want to concentrate on your area of work that is family and child welfare.

MA: No Tata Institute has always taken lead I should say. Right from our senior faculties also, because at that time we were just independent and many new things were happening, particularly criminology, child development, medical psychiatric social work, and there is a need to have lot of psychiatric work in the community based you see, not hospital based. Dr. Bannerji's idea was that let there be community clinics you see, evening clinics, basti mein, toh aisa nahi ho raha hai. It is only mental hospital based work. Hona chahiye you see. But preventive health work bahut abhi, apne curriculum mein bhi badh gaya hai.

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Q: What about in the area of family and child welfare? MA: No, the thing is that we are a very large country, and we can't generalize ki this is Indian because when you go to north eastern states each state family has, Naga family is different from Mizo family, some are matriarchal, some are patriarchal. When you go to the south or to Kerela, again new customs, so I think it is still very vast and unexplored. Just a beginning of our work, that's my thinking you see. I don't think enough has been done or achieved, but beginning is very well done you see. Foundations are also very necessary.

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Q: Over a period of time do you think there been a shift from case work and working with individuals to more of community?

MA: ...Community, yes. It is absolutely necessary.



Q: Could you talk a little about that.

MA: Yes, it is very necessary because say for example there are several government departments and there is administration, there is no case work directly to be done with a case. Suppose if you are a social work trained but you are working in a labour office or in government office, so totally you have to deal with administrative work. And that also policy making also is work, or advocacy also is work, what Medha is doing is not case work you see, she's definitely organizing people for their rights, and their demands. So it's a basic work you see.

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MA: And lot of shift is taking place. Over last 25 years I feel that. Because in some school in Yavatmal district I have seen students, both boys and girls, they go to rural work on bicycles. They are given some districts, villages, so from yavatmal they go seven-eight kilometers on bikes everyday. And totally rural work, in education, in health, sanitation. But I feel we must also give some attention to Gandhian ideologies of gram swaraj and all that. Because while the laws are taking place or changing, say for example gram panchayats and gram sabha, but that has to be strengthened and made effective and they also should be helped to have their own resources. Now for example for last fifteen-sixteen years I'm in Pune and there are several villages around you see, and each village is having hundreds of motorcycles. So who gets that tax? It is the state government. While the village roads are to be maintained by the village gram panchayat, toh agar koi khadda hai ya koi bridge is required they don't have resources to construct it. So money has to reach lowest level.

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Q: Now laws are changing, in all directions lot of changes are taking place, but in my opinion all this paryavaran is very important. The way climate change is taking place, and population is increasing and the way our natural resources are being dwindled. you see, that also is a serious problem, and people need to be educated about their rights over their land and soil, water. Kaisa you see, how the rivers are sold to Bisleri and such companies you see. Isn't it? Forests... so these are serious issues needing social workers attention, and many students are I believe now taking part in it. Are they? You should tell me.

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Q: But how would you link it to family and child welfare? Do you think that something like family and child welfare has become less important or the two are related?

MA: In my opinion it is very much related you see. For example when you think of rural development, so roads and primary health unit and school, these are some of the facilities. But a girl getting married at the age of fourteen or thirteen... Today you see in Pune in surrounding villages, though it is highly educated city, I find girls get married at the age of fifteen even today, and by the time they are twenty it is the third child born. So too much, I always feel sad for a girl who has spent out of sixty months of her marriage, twenty-seven months in pregnancy. So suppose we have to summarize, priorities, I think women must save energy, save water, plan families, not to produce large number of families, so it is agenda for all rural families, or even urban families you see. Educate every child, have good health for every child, have good health for every mother. So I don't think that it is outdated, in fact, it has to become part of school curriculum and junior college curriculum.

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MA: For example several women, because lots of women are looking after gai, bhais, this kind of animals, toh auraton ka kaam bahut badh gaya hai. Lekin dairy ka effect, paisa unke haath mein nahin hai. They pay in cheques.

Q: What do you think about issues of power within the family, patriarchy and those kinds of issues?

MA: Patriarchy is very much there but women also are becoming aware and you will find that in some families even in rural area, women do have power, it's not powerless. It all depends on family cultures, what kind of culture the family has. And at least in rural Maharashtra this Warkari effect is there you see, those who go to Pandarpur and these places. So there is nearly four hundred years tradition in villages, so everywhere itna violence nahi hai. There are differences and levels that I come across.

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Q: If you were to give a message to TISS, to students on the occasion of the platinum jubilee, then what would you like to say.

MA: See, I have always spoken to my students when I was teaching you see, ke don't be pessimistic, you must always have hope. And hope will give you alot of strength. Aaj nahin tto kal honge kamyab, that should be our motto,...so I like that spirit you see. Because if we ourselves start getting ke koi use nahin hai, yeh useless hai, voh useless hai, it doesn't help. Then social worker becomes very ineffective. If he has faith in whatever he or she is doing, then results are always positive. Your faith takes you ahead, and that gives you success.

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Q: Is there anything else you'd like to say or to share about your work or...

MA: No, see Tata Institute has been a joy for me, it has kept me very young. That I was in the company of young students, that after retirement also I have been involved in two-three important activities. I should mention that to you, you see, because Pune is the centre of education and around 1955 my brother-in-law who had his higher education in France, he realised that there are many students coming from rural area here, and not having hostel facility. So there is vidyarthi sahayak samithi. Now we have hostels for 700 students. And you will not believe our monthly charges are just four hundred and fifty rupees for food, and that also we provide that much worth to all students you see. It's a good team of workers working in this. Mrs. Nirmala Purandare, secretary of the..but my brother-in-law who was a mathematician and scientist himself, he took very hard efforts. And my younger brother-in-law who was a Dr. in USA, so we have a very good rural centre about forty kilometers from here. So we have anganwadi workers training center, women development centre, rural balwadis, so all child welfare activities, adoption, foster care, child sexual protection, and also agriculture. We have some land, so many new varieties of vegetables and grains are tried, so demonstration farms are there. And Swadhar. So these are three activities in which it takes full time work from me you see.

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Q: What do you think is the path ahead for TISS?

MA: See we haven't even touched surface in my opinion, because where are the social workers? They are in such a small number. We need to increase our...and it may not be always a paid job



you see, I always tell students that for your survival you need to have a job, but always have some kind of voluntary work. I very much believe in voluntary you see, and propagate that. So large team is available, at least in Pune, to work for issues. And it is possible to repeat such experiments elsewhere also. Not very costly. And we are not short of money. Now I think we are as a nation we are becoming less poor now. It should reach to the lowest level, that was Gandhi's dream. And we are still lacking there you see. So my recent activities are that I give lectures on Gandhian philosophy to college students, whichever college calls me. Particularly in rural area where there are no libraries, students don't get enough reading material that is one of the drawbacks in expansion of education. Our rural colleges don't have enough reading materials, enough resources, enough classrooms, and enough playgrounds. So we have to develop, and certainly, we shall overcome. In another few decades.