SCHOOL FOR TRAINING SOCIAL WORKERS

Scientific Study of Problems the Main Aim

DR. CLIFFORD MANSFORD'S ADDRESS

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For the first time an organised attempt is being made to train young men and women for social work. This laudable work is the undertaking of the Sir Dorabji Tata Graduate School of Social Work, which was declared open to-day by Dr. Clifford Mansford in the presence of a large gathering.

Dr. Mansford, who is Director of the School, said, "This informal opening session of the Sir Dorabji Tata Graduate School of Social Work may well be an important landmark in the educational history of India." India has several social workers and spasmodic efforts at training of social workers had also been made, but the School just opening represents "the first attempt in India to raise social work to the dignity of a learned profession, standing on the same plane as Graduate Schools of law, medicine or education."

"Our student body is small," he continued, "but we have purposely made it so. You are here to-day are a selected fellowship, drawn from all parts of India, chosen from over 100 applicants, and chosen in the belief that you are the breed of work and women, who are ready to profit by this training and to take the lead in elevating the social work of India into this new status."

"We have limited our numbers because we desire the School to be a fellowship. We desire it to be a centre where students and the faculty can join together in a cooperative attempt to evolve a method of attack upon some of our most pressing social problems."

"And if you pay to yourselves: What can 20 students do in the face of India's problems? I would remind you that you 20 are but the beginning. Year by year, your number will increase and the time will come when trained social workers will be at work in every important centre in India. I think back to the year 1864, which marks the establishment of the School of Social Workers maintained by Simmons College and Harvard University in the United States. This School opened with one class-room, a small office and 26 students."

"By 1919, there were schools of social work in 5 American cities. Within the decade 1920 to 1926, twenty schools were established. And at the present time there are at least three full-time schools of social work in the United States and Canada."

"The Sir Dorabji Tata Graduate School of Social Work, as its name implies, a graduate School. If social work is ever to attain a status comparable to that of law or medicine, it is essential that the training school be of a high academic character. Unfortunately, because of the backwardness of social sciences in Indian colleges, we are compelled to offer here certain courses which should have been offered in the colleges, but in time that condition will be corrected."

The activities of a high-grade school of social work fall into three general fields: the academic curriculum, practical work or field work, and social research.

"If social work is, as it is so often defined, a process of adjustment, the social worker must have an adequate knowledge of human nature in order that he may understand the mechanisms of human behavior. He must have an appreciation of the environment, a knowledge of the customs, habits, desires, peculiarities and general outlook of the people among whom he expects to work. He must have an adequate philosophy, in order to see the relation of his task to the social process and to view his work in its proper perspective. The social worker is the one person who is expected to know all the available sources of relief for those in trouble, economic, medical, legal, etc. He is Society's specialist."

"A knowledge of what has been done in the West is of genuine value to India. We would discourage any attempt to follow slavishly Western patterns, but at the same time worthwhile ideas are worthwhile ideas whatever the source."

"A major activity of a School of Social Work is that of social research. The research activities of the School of Social Work are entirely practical, dealing with the everyday problems of social life. But though practical, the research for which this School stands is both scholarly and accurate."

"The Sir Dorabji Tata School does not stand for a narrow specialization. We are attempting in this school to provide both a philosophical background and a practical outlook."

"It is our opinion that a social worker in order to be prepared to meet effectively the multiplicity of complex situations in which he will find himself must have a much wider background than the knowledge of a particular type of work. He must develop habits of thinking which will stand him good when he is confronted by a situation that is out of the ordinary."

"He must be prepared to face each new situation on his own merits and without prejudice, combining the critical attitude of the student and the enthusiasm of the man of action."