

TISS:A SOCIAL SCIENCE Institution addressing educational needs of the nations

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TATA INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES (TISS):

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India holds within a single nation, enormous diversities of spiritual experiences and religions, languages and cultural ethnicities, castes and gender, crafts and economies, and all the main fault lines that may trigger conflicts. Advances in the fields of technology, entertainment, healthcare, and consistent high economic

growth rate, notwithstanding; India is also a land with vast numbers of poor, and deprived people. Further, the nation is confronting its deep-seated caste and gender fractures in its societies. And for all its imperfections, the country has remained unified, democratic, respectful of diversities, and capable of creating better lives for its people and others.

In its history, India has been a stable leader in international trade, culture and civilizations for several millennia. It has had severe set backs in its secure position, particularly in the 150 years of colonization. Still the country can aspire to be a beacon of hope for the world – a progressive force – for our troubled times; particularly given that it is going to have the energy and potential of largest number of young people in the world (an estimated 356 million in the age group of 10-24 years). It can truly transform into a liberal, democratic society; which respects civil, political, social, religious, and economic rights of people; embraces diversity of identities and experiences; and refuses to tolerate discrimination and poverty. The Union Government is addressing these issues seriously.

The NDA Government since May 2014 has strengthened and added to Social Protection measures; using a basket of five social security schemes committed to reach an estimated 260 million people. The PMUY (Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana) aims to provide subsidized cooking fuel (LPG) to 50 million below the poverty line households in three years with a budgetary allocation of INR 80 billion. Housing for all by 2022 is another ambitious scheme that aims to build 20 million houses in urban and 10 million houses in rural areas. Under PMMBY (Pradhan Mantri Mudra Bank Yojana) small business owners will receive micro credit loans of up to INR 1.0 million to be repaid in five seven years. Approximately 120 million people have subscribed to two low premium state sponsored accident and life insurance schemes: Suraksha Bima Policy and Jeevan Jyoti Bima Policy.

Even with rapid mobility along the rural-urban continuum, rural areas will remain home for a majority of the Indians. To provide for a holistic rural development, the SAGY (Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana) scheme aims to develop model villages with all social, welfare and infrastructure provisions. In urban areas, to create an enabling environment for industry and business, the government will support training of skilled workforce. Another ambitious scheme aims at incentivizing employers to take on additional workers has been allocated up to INR 10 billion in the Union Budget 2016-17, extending coverage to the remote Northeastern and tribal people inhabited regions.

Social protection policies and programs contribute to inclusive, fair societies that guarantee a minimum standard of living for all. Key challenges faced include the following: Increased, accountable and transparent public social investment leading to realization of the economic and social rights; Co-creation of innovative programmes and ownership of people through informed decision making and participation in design and implementation; Intersectorial co-ordination and alignment; and effective use of IT and the linking with Unique Identification System (Aadhar). Importantly, the Indian economy can afford such measures easily, especially in current times of relative prosperity. Even as the State's self-interest combines with a growing sense of public duty towards its most disadvantaged citizens, it might that mean Myrdal's pessimistic assessments and predictions may not materialize as (Rachel Sabates-Wheeler, Stephen Devereux, 2013).

Tata Institute of Social Sciences has been in the forefront of educating human service professionals on a range of social, economic, health, environmental and public policy issues. It has also developed and demonstrated pioneering intervention strategies to work with the most vulnerable communities. TISS also works closely with Union and State Governments on development and implementation of public policies, schemes and programs; including supporting and tracking programs for addressing key current issues. Outlined below are some of the key ongoing initiatives in the area of health.

Health and Mental Health

TISS has consistently worked in the area of health, particularly those relevant to the national health context. Key amongst this is the combating of communicable diseases that take a heavy toll on the country's well being, as well as innovating in Mental Health care, particularly for the poor and destitute.

Addressing Health care issues in slums of M-East ward of Mumbai: TISS launched the M East Ward Project in 2011-12 in its Platinum Jubilee, to demonstrate the importance of higher education institutes to respond to their neighbouring, local and regional humanitarian challenges through proactive action. In 2011, TISS closed all its teaching programs for two weeks, so that its students, staff and faculty could undertake a comprehensive social, economic, health and basic services survey. This exercise was a massive effort to expose and deepen the engagement of the Institute's members towards the harsh realities of the people living here.

M-East ward is one of the administrative wards in the northeast periphery of Mumbai; ranked the lowest in the city by the Human Development Report (2009) on HDI indicators (including education, health and livelihoods). 77% population of the ward lives in slums with some of the worst living conditions. Along with people who are extremely vulnerable and poor, the ward has poor social and physical infrastructure. (<https://www.facebook.com/Healthy-India-Chronicle-1943701439207121/>)



(<https://twitter.com/HEALTHYINDIAHIC>)



Transforming health and sanitation condition of M ward is one of TISS's mission for which it has evolved a model of inclusive and sustainable urban development (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/healthy-india-chronicle-695134147/>) through collaborative actions of local communities, academic institutions,



government and corporates. Following the assessment, TISS did micro-level planning with the participation of local people to develop strategies to overcome (<https://plus.google.com/u/0/105532041895694889876>)



acute poverty, deprivation, morbidity and mortality. Now these have translated into concrete projects that address basic services and entitlements in key sectors (<mailto:healthyindiachronicle@gmail.com>). including education, livelihoods, housing, water, sanitation and health with an objective to reduce the Infant mortality rate from 67 to 20 per 1000 live births. Active support and participation of the Mumbai Municipal Corporation and communities and a convergent model is employed to create sustainable change.

Combating Communicable Disease Spread

The GFATM (Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria)–round 7, counseling component grant, was awarded to the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) in September 2008. The project named Saksham, a Sanskrit word, which means “capable” or “self-reliant”, seeks to strengthen the national health system for HIV counselling by building the capacity of its functionaries. As the principal recipient of the grant, TISS implemented the Saksham programme through its 38 partner organisations, all located in institutions of higher education, spread across 25 states and 1 Union Territory. Adopting the 360 degree approach to capacity building, it undertook training of counseling personnel placed within the Integrated Counseling and Testing Centres (ICTC), Anti Retroviral Therapy (ART) and Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) treatment Centres; strengthened institutional capacities of partner organizations; and provided on-site supportive supervision to the trained personnel. Since its inception, Saksham has conducted 980 counselor-training programs and trained 14915 individual counseling personnel.

In August 2014, Saksham signed an MoU with the Mumbai District Tuberculosis Control Society (MDTCS) to support its TB control programme to initiate counseling services. Its aimed to enhance treatment adherence among drug resistant TB patients, and strengthen HIV/TB services convergence in Mumbai.

Counseling for TB patients aimed to address their psychosocial needs; along with looking into structural factors that hamper TB treatment compliance such as lack of adequate nutrition and access to resources for personal hygiene. Thus, for the first time in the country in Mumbai, a district TB control programme has full-time counselors available for TB patients; with 20 counselors already appointed to the district wards, with plans to include seven more. Besides inducting the counselors, Saks ham has also sensitized, trained and provided hands-on support to 360 TB personnel of the MDTCS to improve their interpersonal skills and attitude towards TB patients. Some of the key activities include counseling patients to ensure treatment adherence, identification and counseling of defaulters, awareness campaigns about TB, etc. The TB support program is being extended to other parts of Maharashtra and other States at the request of Individual State Governments and the Government of India.

Mental Health and Social Well-Being

India is home to 150 million persons with mental health issues; with approximately 10% of the population suffering from common mental disorders, while the lifetime prevalence of severe mental disorders is 1.9%. Given that approximately 70% Indians are poor, exposure to scarcity and deprivation increases life stress, particularly in disadvantaged groups and tribes. Critically, inequitable access to an optimal quality of life and capabilities results in a culture of othering and hyper-segregation.

Globally, the intersectionality between poverty, homelessness and mental ill health is being studied closely as is the efficacy and effectiveness of comprehensive, culture sensitive, mental health solutions. Some of the serious challenges are being addressed by progressive legislative reforms such as the Mental Health Care Act 2017, the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the Mental Health Policy; as well as gains in access to livelihood options and an increasingly connected life with the means to mediate structural barriers such as gender, caste and class divisions.

Still, over 20,000 persons with long term needs continue to languish in mental hospitals; over 130,000 persons continue to die by suicide each year; the treatment gap remains ranges between 80-90%, and over a million persons sleep rough and with a mental health issue.

Early 2017, The Supreme Court asked the Centre to frame guidelines for rehabilitation of persons who have been cured of their mental illness but no body is willing to take him back to home.

With a contribution of US\$100,000 from a well-wisher, TISS set up a field action project Tarasha is a field action project conceptualized as a community based recovery model for women recovering from mental disorders. At the core, the project addresses issues of Self, Shelter and Livelihoods. Several women were brought to a collective living home, provided skill training of individual liking and after securing sustainable employment were integrated with the society

BALM and TISS Collaboration

BALM and the TISS School for Mental Health and Social Inclusion have collaborated to address both the humanitarian and mental health crises on the one hand and the human resource development challenge on the other. Embedded in a culture of equity and justice, both organizations are aligned to a shared vision of synthesizing knowledge, sharing good practice on mental health and social well-being.

Students from TISS – BALM program have the unique opportunity to draw from successful models operational on the ground globally and locally. They are trained by a multidisciplinary team of clinicians, academics, advocates, experiential experts, and researchers, visiting and distinguished scientists. Thus along with theoretical knowledge, they are also in the field (through supervised placements in collaborative field action projects , engaging directly with the subjects of their studies, gathering insights about the progress, challenges and ambiguities of their experience. Thus a key quality inculcated with students is the capacity to accept uncertainties of outcomes, and yet remain persistent when dealing with wicked or complex problems.

The collaborative initiative also generates evidence based interventions, approaches and models concerned with emergency care and recovery services for persons who are poor, homeless, living with mental health concerns. An outcome of this has been the emergence of a holistic framework of outpatient collaborative care that integrates biomedical, psychological and social paradigms to provide a range of inclusive living options for persons needing ongoing care. The Banyan and BALM-TISS' programs are operational across three states (Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Maharashtra) with 15 service access points, that provide linkages to hospital, community, co-housing and inclusive living based options.

3.2.3. The TISS – Banyan Resource Centre on Homelessness and Mental Illness

According to official reports, India is home to 1.8 million homeless persons. It is estimated that between 25-30% of all homeless persons have at least one mental health condition and/or a co-occurring substance use issue. Mental ill health and homelessness are complex problems in isolation, and in combination, have persistent and devastating effects at the individual and family levels. Exposed to abuse, injury and starvation, and often experiencing a sense of alienation and loss of personhood; such persons live on the margins, excluded in multiple ways, often susceptible to multi-dimensional losses including the ability to participate in socio economic life.

For over two decades, The Banyan has been grappling with ways to promote social inclusion, enable access to livelihoods and support networks, and enthuse overall enhancement in quality of life; and has sheltered over 2000 individuals who have been poor, homeless and mentally unwell, of whom over 1800 have been reunited with their families. Keeping in mind, the vicious knot between mental ill-health, homelessness and poverty, most of its solutions have to come to integrate medical, psychological, sociological and social interventions and approaches, in such a way that they may be appropriate, comprehensive and responsive.

Focusing on the importance of social roles in recovery. The TISS-Banyan Resource Centre for Homeless Persons with Mental illness was developed. It is a health and social care system design that addresses the multiple deprivations that homeless people with mental illness experience; and generates pathways to recovery through energizing individual and collective social and cultural identity. For homeless persons living with severe mental disorders, it provides emergency and recovery centres and creates safe and enabling spaces for recovery, agency and reintegration, and restores dignity. Services include critical time interventions, crisis care, and access to clinical and social care (including access to livelihoods and social entitlements).

The resource centre provides open shelter based services that is a localised, community owned mental health care delivery system focused on providing access to basic amenities (food, clothing, sanitation, shelter) and higher self care needs (health care, social care, access to livelihoods, etc.) for homeless persons with mental health issues. It seeks to create a vibrant, inclusive, community driven space that breaks down barriers, challenges prejudice, promotes re-personalization, and promotes social mixing, thus building stronger, more inclusive communities. One such open shelter has been the five-year-old Open Shelter for

Homeless Men with Psychosocial Needs, in collaboration with the Corporation of Chennai and HCL Foundation, through which over 400 men were reached and 80 returned back to the families.

The Home Again Approach: Normalizing mental illness, building valued social roles

The Home Again innovation fosters choice-based, inclusive living spaces through clustered or scattered homes in rural or urban neighbourhoods with a range of supportive services. People form affinity groups and live together in homes, in a community, creating a shared space of comfort that mimics a familial environment and promotes a feeling of kinship.

Currently, over 200 persons with mental health issues access the Banyan's inclusive living options for persons experiencing long term care needs, across six Districts and two States; with program expanding to four states. This includes graded levels of community housing and supportive services for persons who experience low to profound disability; with services such as a co-housing facility in a local commune, Home Again, that provides rented accommodation, personal assistance and coaching support within rural and urban neighbourhoods, as well as independent living arrangements (like elderly homes / hostels).

For this, the support of the GOI and State Governments, as well as various groups working in Mental Health Services have been sought to get all people out of mental hospitals and mixed with the society with sustainable skills and employment.

Strengthening Leadership and Local Governance for Deepening Impact of Prime Minister's Vision of Development and Welfare for All

One of the key foci of the TISS is to look to the leadership into the future. It is here that young people and the PRI leaders at the grassroots have a critical role to play.

(i) Investing in the Future Generation to facilitate transformation

Beyond being the grist of the mill of economic success of a few, could the youth of India also become dynamic agents of positive social change of the country and the world? Do they, more than their forebears, understand and feel compassion towards the suffering of others; fellow humans treading similar paths in the closely

intertwined, globalized world? How can they be skillfully employed in the world in future, so that their very large demographic dividend can transform Indian Society?

The Prime Minister's Rural Development Fellows Scheme is a pioneering Initiative started in 2010 to deploy skilled and committed young development facilitators on the ground to realize the promise of the excellent legal and policy frameworks in India for decentralized development. Conflict situations highlight gaps of grassroots level governance in India. That presence of conflict in the country is an outcome of rising inequalities and disparities, displacement and dispossession is amply evidenced in literature across the world. This also lends urgency to reach development gains to people living in poverty in remote villages in the country. The pattern of growth in the Indian development scenario – as in other developed and emerging economies – seems to have left behind a large number of people in mineral rich, remote tribal and rural areas, dispossessed from their homes

and livelihoods creating severe insecurity. Increased violence in the form of Left Wing Extremism (LWE) supposedly aims at reversing this disruption in lives and other losses experienced by the impoverished tribal inhabitants of these areas .

One of the effects of longstanding internal conflicts is a breakdown in communication between the state administration and local population. The Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), Government of India (GoI) and with state governments initiated the Prime Minister's Rural Development Fellows Scheme (PMRDFs) with the Tata Institute of Social Sciences as the knowledge partner to address this breakdown. It focuses on improving the lives of poor people in Left Wing Extremism affected districts, by deploying energetic and competent young development professionals as Fellows. These Fellows are trained to provide decision-making support to district administration; and work to instill confidence among key responsibility holders to work together to transform conflict affected areas and communities. From 2012-14, 300 dynamic young people worked in the fellowship in 111 conflict districts in 18 states on core development issues. At the end of the period, many of the Fellows moved on to work state governments and other development organizations.

(ii) Restoring Dignity of Blue Collar Work

In recent years, a significant contribution of the TISS is towards the skill building goals of the government; with the underlying principle of dissolving the barrier between blue collar and white-collar workers and restoring dignity to skilled labour. TISS's School of Vocational education has developed and imparting skills in 25 areas in Work Integrated Training Model in Hub-Spoke framework across the country with over 10000 students undergoing training. TISS provides skill building knowledge partnership for youth in universities in various parts of the country through National University Student Skill Development (NUSSD) Program. Several thousand students in colleges in Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhnad, Rajasthan, Bihar and a few States are going through basic life skills.

(iii) Empowering Efficient and Accountable PRIs

The experience of PMRDF and other fellowship programs show that a few million young people trained and placed to work with Panchyat Raj institutions and communities across the country could play a critical role in planning and delivering various development programs on the ground. Committed and competent Village Development Facilitators (VDFs, like the PMRDFs) would work towards goals of priority public programs such as health, education, nutrition, drinking water and sanitation in local communities; as well as shoulder the significant human resources and finance management tasks of PRIs. In addition to strengthening governance and enabling policy convergence on the ground, investing in local change agents can also contribute to the collectivization of citizens, expansion and diversification livelihoods, and emergence of entrepreneurship towards value-added local produce and non-farm employment.

Tata Institute of Social Sciences has developed resource materials to inform, educate, motivate and put to action the elected representatives of Panchayats in the country.

One, TISS offers a Choice based Credit System course on Village Development Plan through participatory processes. Two, TISS has produced resource material at the request of the National Commission on Women and Ministry of Women and Child Development; aimed at developing capacity of elected women panchayat leaders in seven states that have increased representation of women in PRIs from 33% to 50%. Initial trainings have been initiated in Rajasthan through Rajasthan Rural Development Training Institute. Three, TISS has produced 20 modular booklets for training elected panchayat leaders in English and Hindi, commissioned by the Ministry of Panchayat Raj, Government of India. The GoI released the modules at a meeting of State PRI Ministers and Secretaries in the presence of

GoI minister and officials in Bhopal in July 2017. Finally, the TISS also produced resource modules on Social Accountability training on the request of the Ministry of Rural Development, used to train State level officials from all States through the SRDIs.

TISS is now integrating all these learnings into digital form that can be offered through mobilizes to strengthen capabilities of PRIs. For this TISS is translating the resource material in all languages, and digitizing the contents of the training so that they can be offered through mobiles.

The task of empowering local leadership and enabling them to work with PRIs and communities is no doubt challenging, especially in an era of shrinking public finances. Alternative and long-term models have to be explored including the adoption of specific districts by public and private sector industrial corporations and business houses that can support training, deployment and monitoring of village development facilitators.

History of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences

"On May 31, 1893, Swami Vivekananda and Mr. Jamshetji Tata sailed together on a ship from Japan to the United States. Swami Vivekananda then told Mr. Jamshetji Tata to create another centre of learning (in addition to an institution for Science and Technology) and research in the field of humanities too. Tata Trusts followed up with the vision of Swamiji and Mr. Tata, and established Sir Dorabji Tata Graduate School of Social Work in 1936 at the height of Great Depression aimed to create human service professionals to work with and enable people overcome poverty, deprivation and unemployment. Swami Vivekananda whose vision was to create a mass consciousness through service and education has in fact written: "We want that education, by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded and by which one can stand on one's own feet." The Tata Institute of Social Sciences has been striving to strengthen primary and secondary school education and offer vocational and higher education to realize the vision of Swami Vivekananda and Jamsetji Tata.

After Independence the Tata Trusts handed over the Tata Institute of Social Sciences to the Government of India. Since then TISS is a centrally funded public university, and the Government of India has been providing the Institute's Plan and Maintenance Grants. TISS is multi-campus university with campuses located in Mumbai and Tuljapur in Maharashtra, Guwahati and Hyderabad; and has expanded its activities in several states through its centres at Andaman and

Nicobar Islands, Bihar, Chennai, Ladakh, Nagaland, New Delhi, Raipur, Ranchi, and Thiruvananthapuram. It has over 5000 students on roll; with nearly one-fifth being Doctoral Scholars.

TISS continues to produce committed high quality human service professionals in a range of social and human development sectors: health, mental health, social epidemiology, clinical psychology; education and vocational skill development; human resources management, media and cultural studies, rural and urban development, livelihoods and social entrepreneurship, climate change, disaster management, regulatory governance, focused work on women, children, adolescents, youth, aged; disability studies; through 55 cutting-edge post-graduate programmes, integrated M. Phil. – Ph. D. program on all these areas. With an innovative curriculum TISS education stays relevant in the highly competitive higher education sector in an increasingly globalized world. A consistent effort is to develop the skills relevant in the new economy that can strengthen government initiatives in the social sector. TISS has been deeply involved skill development initiatives since 2011, and we have able to demonstrate work integrated model of training with over 12000 participants from all our states and UTs are receiving training in 21 verticals in Hub and Spoke Mode, TISS also developed and offering National University Students Skill Development program to enhance employability of students graduating out of universities. This program was demonstrated in 10 universities from 2013-16 and now reached full-scale implementation by Governments of Jharkhand and Andhra Pradesh, and through industry support offered in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan.

At any given point in time TISS faculty is working on over 500 research initiatives. TISS has collaborative research and student exchange programs with over 120 universities and institutions across the world, in addition to being member of several university networks – Himalayan Universities Consortium, Erasmus Mundus Partnership, Global Labour University, BRICS Network University, McDonnell International Scholars Academy and others.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama answering questions from the audience during the launch of the Secular Ethics course at Tata Institute of Social Sciences in Mumbai, India on August 14, 2017. Photo by Tenzin Choejor/OHHDL

On the 14th August 2017, His Holiness Dalai Lama inaugurated the new course at TISS on Secular Ethics that represented basic principles around which the TISS was established. The director Professor S Parasuraman said: "The Dalai Lama's guidance to the institute is a throwback to that meeting of minds and a conversation for the future of India that began 121 years ago. Once again we are speaking of the role and responsibility of universities, corporate captains and individuals to society".

Such a meeting of minds is what TISS is working towards, one that relooks at the priorities of a nation burgeoning with potential and yet facing sharp inequities that squander and diminish its possibilities. Such an expansive outlook would be able to hold both prosperity and equality together, and work creatively and persistently towards a just and sustainable future.
