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Interdisciplinary Approaches**



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Editorial

Over the past three decades there has been extensive exploration of spirituality and religion in its connection with social work. Religion has played a central role in the development of social work as a profession. Historically social work originated under the inspiration of the Judeo-Christian religious traditions of its founders. Religious ideas and teachings have influenced the development of social work concept in general and the principles and values in particular. There have been attempts to establish that the major religions show compatibility with social work. Thus religion has close connections with social work, workers and exponents of religions often perform functions complimentary and they are significant sources of referrals to each other. The social work profession in the process of helping the needy often makes use of the resources available with the religious organizations.

Spirituality for its connections with social work has been a matter of discussion throughout the development of social work. During the last two decades there is promising literature on the subject of spirituality in social work and spiritually sensitive social work practice.

In the context of social work there has been explanation in which the terms spirituality and religion are commonly used spirituality. As noted by scholars, spirituality involves understanding the interconnectedness of self with others and with the universe.

The connection between spirituality and religion are not clearly understood and therefore often argued. Spirituality and religion are separate, though often related. Spirituality is considered as an experience or feeling of unity or closeness with God, thus it is a very personal aspect of his/her being in connection with others. Whenever there is an attempt to organize this spiritual experience in the institutionalized context, it takes the form of a religion.

From the above discussion a few obvious questions arise: What is the connection between spirituality and religion with social work? What is the extent of inspiration and influence of religion and spirituality on social work education? Does social work education and training have any effect on the practice of spirituality or religion? What are the reasons for social workers showing increased interest in spirituality and religion?

The international conference on ‘Religion, Spirituality and Social Work’ was organized to provide a forum for discussion and deliberations on these and such other questions. The conference highlighted the role of spirituality and religion in social work education and practice. It also sought to explore the connections and inter-linkages between religion, spirituality and social work profession. The focus of the Conference was to bring concerned personnel and institutions on a common platform to debate and discuss issues and practices associated with the conference theme. Eminent scholars, researchers, practitioners, trainers and the representatives of various organizations participated actively in the conference.

So the papers in this volume are selected and revised presentations of the First International Conference on Spirituality and Social Work with the theme “Religion, Spirituality and Social Work: Exploring Connections” December 28 to 30, 2011. It was organized by Centre for Studies in Rural Development-Institute of Social Work and Research (CSR-D-ISWR), Ahmednagar is one of the pioneer institutions in community extension and social work education in India and was supported by Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth Centre for Science-Religion Studies.

The main objectives of the conference are:

- To explore new vistas of Spirituality, religion and its connection with Social work education and practice
- To bring together theoretical discourse and empirical contributions on Social work education and practice

- To discuss the relevance, relations and challenges before social work profession

The papers in this volume, all seeking to delve into the intricate relationship among religion, spirituality and social work are written by social workers and theoreticians.

The first section takes up general themes and relationships on religion, spirituality and social work. In the first paper, Prof Kuruvilla Pandikattu, one of the editors of this book, bases himself on two broad categories of general spirituality – the Eastern and the Western, though he limits the Eastern understanding primarily to the Hindu and Western primarily to the Christian spiritualities. The aim of this chapter is to draw some orientations from both these spiritualities which can inspire contemporary search for authenticity.

Going beyond the popular stereotypes of the spirituality (and therefore, mysticism) of Indian and Western traditions, the author wants to broadly reflect on the spirituality of the Western tradition as that of service. Then he reflects on the spirituality of the Indian tradition as that of silence. This is followed by giving two illustrations of two great spiritual personalities which may be complemented by “Spirituality of Silence,” of the Eastern tradition. He gives examples of two contemporaries seers to illustrate these tendencies. Finally, the author advocates a spirituality that is open to the world and that enters into creative dialogue with other traditions, a spirituality that enhances the living conditions of the poor and at the same time opens them to the interiority of their own beings. Such a spirituality, it is hoped, will contribute towards better human authenticity and sustainability of our world – ecologically, economically and spiritually! That would be a meaningful spirituality for contemporary social work, according to the author.

The second paper, by Dr Suresh Pathare, Director of CSRD and the main organizer of the international conference, is an attempt to explore the connections between religion, spirituality and ethics

in the paradigm of professional social work. In the first part the author presents an overview of historical trends of the connection between spirituality, religion and social work profession. Then he give the definitions of the terms religion, spirituality and ethics as found and widely used in the literature on social work profession. In the second part he draws on some ideas about ethico-spiritual paradigm of social work.

To understand religion and spirituality in professional social work, it will be proper to briefly discuss the role of religion in today's world, the nature of spirituality, and the historical trends of connection between religion, spirituality and social work.

The next article by Pankaj Kumar Das and Dr. Vijay Mane, social work professors from Yashwantrao Chavan School of Social Work, Satara, Maharashtra, talks of religion, spirituality and ethics of social work from an Indian perspective. It is common observation in India that people, whether intellectual or illiterate, are happier discussing their personal psycho-social problems with priests, astrologers, tantrics etc, than social workers. People have no hesitation in paying them. Therefore the "Religion and Spirituality" of the client in India is an important issue to be acknowledged. Throughout Indian history, religion has been an important part of the country's culture. Religious diversity and religious tolerance have deep historical roots which are established in the country by law and custom.

This chapter makes an effort to substantiate these theoretical assumptions about Religion, Spirituality and Ethics of Social Work from Indian perspective. The authors conclude by asserting that materialism promoted by science has failed to give the real meaning to the ultimate purpose of life. The number of suicides cases is on rise. The feeling of emptiness and hopelessness is growing among Indian people's life. As a helping profession, Social Work should take a strategic step to incorporate Religion and Spirituality in Social Work education and practice so that we can "help people to help themselves in true sense".

The next paper by Dr. Jayashree M Mehta and Dr. S.V. Hippargi Director and Professor of Bharati Vidyapeeth Abhijit Kadam Institute of Management and Social Sciences, dwells on spirituality as the heart of all development. Today the ideal of development as a continuing process of growth, creation, improvement and positive change has yielded to a reality more frequently marked by destruction, division, deprivation and depletion. The difference between the cherished ideal and the cruel reality finds its roots in a poverty of values and spirituality. That poverty, hunger and other deprivations persist in an age of global plenty is not an issue of logistics, technology or financing so much as a question of values and morality. Setting a clear and defined course of action that we all agree on with regard to the development agenda is important but we must not forget that the world cannot be changed with plans alone. It can only change when our value, attitude and action change. The crisis of the non-implementation of action plans is itself a crisis of values – a spiritual challenge. The authors hold that people who wish to have moral harmony in the world, in their nation and society, should first cultivate their personal lives by inculcating righteousness and a sincere will. This is the foundation of a happy, prosperous life for all, from the emperor down to the common man. Thus spirituality is the heart of all development, including social work and development.

Spirituality and values have not occupied a prominent place in the development agenda of recent decades. However if development concern the relationship between people and people on the one hand and people and nature on the other then sustainable development that sustains people and respects nature requires that such relationships be based on and guided by fundamental human values and a spiritual perspective of life.

The next two articles deal with Buddhism and social work. The first paper by Dr. Mrs. Nisha C Waghmare, Walchand College of Arts and Science, Solapur, Maharashtra reflects on Buddhism as the Pioneer of Social Work Practices. Although Social work education originated outside India, the same cannot be said about

the social work practices. The earliest references of social work in the world date back to the period of Buddha and the Mauryan period of ancient India which has been acclaimed as the golden era of India. This was a period of about 1500 years during which Buddhism flourished not only in all the nooks and corners of the India but abroad as well. Buddhism, one of the most ancient religions of the world is India's earliest endeavor in social work / social welfare practises. Gautam Buddha, the founder of Buddhism attacked the unjust social practices prevalent at that time. The society was governed by the birth based Varna system, under which the society was divided into four Varnas viz. the Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and the Shudras. The upper three Varnas enjoyed all the privileges while disabilities were heaped upon the Shudras. The status of women too was denigrated and was treated at par with the Shudras. The animal sacrifice was widely practiced. Buddhism vehemently attacked the then prevalent Varna system which discriminated against human beings on the basis of birth based Varna system under which the Shudras and the women suffered the most. Buddhism admitted the Shudras and the women into its fold and gave them an equal status. The emancipation of the Shudras and the women, thanks to the efforts of the Sangha led by Buddha was a great step forward in social transformation from the unjust Varna system to a progressive society based on the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity.

The author sees Buddhist Sangha as an organization of dedicated monks that played pivotal role in effecting the social transformation in India in that period. The Sangha undertook not only religious preaching but also a number of social services and social welfare activities as well. Thus the author shows that the Buddhism and especially the Sangha were the pioneers of social work practices not only in India but the world.

This is complemented and enlarged by the Atul Lalasaheb More, an active social worker, who looks at Buddhism in the contemporary context of religion.

The article by James Ponniah, Dean, Faculty of Philosophy, Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune, India, explores the Discriminating Social Structures and Empowering Religious Resources in the context of social work. This paper aims to explore the mediating role of religion between the vulnerable groups and the process of development. Interfacing between the socially discriminated marginal subjects and the all encompassing process of development—especially in the age of globalization, religion provides for the subalterns an alternative space that: generates symbolic power to negotiate welfare schemes with the state; upholds their human dignity and identity assertion; facilitates their contestation of the discriminatory caste system and the negation of its inequality; displays and safeguards their newly gained socio-economic status. By doing this, religion contributes for the affirmation of UN charter's faith in the dignity and worth of the human person and its determination to promote social progress and development for the vulnerable groups. However, religion, by seeking to ensure the protection of the environment through the folk religious practices of the subalterns, does not fail to critique the process of development when the latter seeks to devastate mother nature.

The next article by Dr. Nazir Jabbar Sheikh, Asst. Professor, Manavlok's College of Social Science, Ambajogai Dist Beed, Maharashtra, deals with Islam. Cultural competency is fundamental social work. The result-oriented social work is practiced by considering the cultural and religious aspects of community and application of appropriate indigenous knowledge of the community. Islam, one of the world's largest religion, an excellent source for formulating principles and values for social workers, yet to be taken into consideration at large extent. Understanding its beliefs and practices has become essential knowledge for practicing social work. "Quran", "Hadith" and "Shariat" are the best sources for understanding Islam and its beliefs and searching the solution of the problem inside. Irrespective of considering cultural and religious diversities, the western model for social work practice is followed. After fifty

years of social work, practice we are developing a model included religious values and spiritual aspects for practice.

This paper examines the relevance values in Islam with social work, and references in the light of “Quran”, “Hadith” and “Shariat” for social work practices. The discussion is also made on the practical aspects of religion for social work intervention and strategies for work with Muslim leading for Workers cultural competency for effective social work.

This is followed by the article of Dr. Rama Achyut Pande, Manavloks College of Social Sciences, Ambajogai Dist Beed. He treats social work from the Hindu perspective. Social work and human history go together. Social Work was always in human societies although it begins to be a defined pursuit and profession in the 19th century. Professional social workers work with individuals, groups, families, organization and communities. While working with them social workers should concern with their social problems, their causes and their solutions. At the same time they should concern about the culture of community, their customs, traditions and religious beliefs, values and ethics. Because each religion and culture have their own techniques or sources to solve their problems. India has had a glorious tradition of spirituality and religion. As each religion teaches us the philosophy of humanity as Daya, Karuna, Ahimsa, Equality, Human Rights and Social Justice, Dignity of Individual. In Veershiva religion there was no dignity to man and manual work Basveshwara of Veershiva spiritual religion find out some solution to abolish social evils which were created in justice in the society. Intervention sources of Veerashiva religion to solve the social problem were very effective be not only preached them to attain social justice.

In this paper researcher intended to trace the similarities between Veershiva a religion and social work, social issues focused by Veershiva's and the intervention sources available in the Veershiva religion practiced by Basaveshwara - Anubhav Mantap (a spiritual parliament) Kayak (Work as worship and Vachana's

rational progressive thoughts) which was created literacy revolution. As Veershiva religion developed its own culture which implies harmonious relationship between an individual and his society. This religion have spiritual base which is based on the doctrine of Kayakve Kailasa' which means that work is worship and by this tried to attain dignity of man and manual work and thus attain principal of 'dignity of man' which is also a principal of professional social work.

As social work grew out of humanitarian and democratic ideas and its values are based on respect for the equality, worth and dignity of all people. It focuses on meeting human needs and developing human potentials, human rights and social justice. In concern with this all these values and principles were focused in Veerashiva religion, while working with the people Basaveshwara used the sources of intervention of Veerashiva religion. It is the need of the day that professional social workers should concern about these values, principles, culture of to solve the social problems.

The final article by Prof Sanjai Bhatt, Department of Social Work, University of Delhi, explore further on the intimate relationship among Religion, Spirituality and Social Work Engagement. He considers the interconnected of these independent concepts and urges that Spirituality should be brought as part of practicing skills in the education. There is more need to include the same in syllabi of Social work courses.

We hope this this book will be able to enlighten us on the complex and dynamic relationship between spirituality and social work. If the readers are inspired to look deeper into social work and broader into spirituality, we consider that our effort has borne fruit.

Suresh Pathare
Kuruvilla Pandikattu
(Guest Editors)

God Within and Among Us: Towards an Emerging Spirituality of Social Work

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What are some of the elements of a spirituality relevant for today, especially in the context of social work? How can we formulate a spirituality relevant to the contemporary times? Can there be spiritualities in dialogue with each other? What are some of the orientations of contemporary spiritualities that can make human life more authentic? These are some of the questions we attempt to answer in this chapter.

In this quest I base myself on two broad categories of general spirituality – the Eastern and the Western, though I limit the Eastern understanding primarily to the Hindu and Western primarily to the Christian spiritualities. The aim of this chapter is to draw some orientations from both these spiritualities which can inspire contemporary search for authenticity.

Going beyond the popular stereotypes of the spirituality (and therefore, mysticism) of Indian and Western traditions, I want to broadly reflect on the spirituality of the Western tradition as that of service. Then I want to reflect on the spirituality of the Indian tradition as well as that of silence. This is followed by giving two illustrations of two great spiritual personalities which may be complemented by “Spirituality of Silence,” of the Eastern tradition. I give examples of two contemporaries seers to illustrate these tendencies. Finally, we advocate a spirituality that is open to the world and that enters into creative dialogue with other traditions.

Such a spirituality, I hope, will contribute towards better human authenticity and sustainability of our world – ecologically, economically and spiritually! That would be a meaningful spirituality for contemporary social work, I hope.

1. Beyond the Stereotypes of East and West

Stereotypes abound between the Eastern and the Western mentalities or ways of life. In general three keywords may sum up the mentality of the East, as opposed to the West: intuitive, receptive and feminine. The East is considered to be intuitive and experiential, where the reason is relegated to a secondary level. At the intuitive level, they experience reality and encounter life at a deeper level beyond words. They are also receptive, not merely to new ideas and visions, but to new experiences and realities. They can be open to nuances and vagaries of life and can live with surprises and sudden breakthroughs in their daily existence. At the experiential level, they are flexible, open and fascinated at the experiential level by the newness of life and so there is a profound depth in them. Not only are these two qualities more feminine, the East embodies the feminine features of charm (including modesty and shyness), perseverance and even submission or surrender. So in short we may say that the East is both feminine and spiritual.

This makes the East vibrantly religious, deeply spiritual and profoundly philosophical (or intellectual). If we walk across the streets of India, it is obvious that religion is a living business. The normal life of people, including their professional life, is intimately linked with gods, temples, priests and religious festivities. The people are born into religion, breathe the air of religiosity throughout their life and die with religion. Religion in India is a living phenomenon. No wonder, India has given birth to four living world religions, besides the thousands of living religions we find today.¹

Closely connected to the religious life is the interiority and spirituality of the people. Moving away from the structures of

religious life, there is an inbuilt spirituality that permeates every fiber of an average Indian, even though he may be a non-believer in any particular religious tradition. Spirituality and the corresponding attitudes of peace, tranquility and acceptance of life are part of the Indian ethos as it is lived today.

The world-view that has given birth to the deep religiosity interiority is a profoundly philosophical one. The rich and diversity mythology that is part of the Indian culture coupled with the nuanced philosophical articulations of the various positions with regards to the meaning and destiny of life make India deeply intellectual and philosophical. An average student of philosophy cannot fathom the depth of Indian philosophy, simply because it is too vast and too subtle. Because it is so subtle, it is elitist and is only available to a few experts who have spent years specializing it. What is interesting is that even today there are people who devote their whole lives only to study one sub-branch of one of the many philosophical system.²

Corresponding to the stereotypes of the East, the West may be described as rational, assertive and masculine. Giving emphasis to rational thinking and critical analysis, the West is perceived as calculative, progressive and empirical. So we can understand the growth of science and technology as a necessary consequence of the rational world-view, which has taken the civilization beyond the mythological to the scientific world view.³

Unlike the receptive mentality of the Orient, the Western culture prides itself in being an assertive culture that wants to control and enhance nature and themselves. As an assertive culture, they tend to take things in their own hands and be responsible for what is happening around them. Here the emphasis is on, planning, activity and change. The people here feel their uniqueness in being able to change the situation around them and thus being in control.

These two qualities are typically masculine and so it is no wonder that the Western society is considered as masculine, where the hero is praised. As an assertive and conquering culture, the West focuses on control, domination and progress of the world

and of themselves. So in this world-view humans are responsible for their own actions and pride themselves in their scientific achievements and technological innovations. To sum up we can hold that the Western culture is essentially materialistic and this worldly.

These feature of the West makes them pragmatic, progressive and anthropocentric. As a practical and pragmatic culture, the emphasis of the culture is on using things and even persons. So the “use and throw” culture that has developed in the West, without any recourse to the collective harm done to the environment is understandable from this perspective. Such a pragmatic attitude is applied to religious groups as well. It is easy for one to give up one’s commitment to a religious organisation if one does not “feel at home” there.

Further such a world-view has led to incredible progress, especially in the last two hundred years after the industrial revolution.⁴ Though such progress has brought about overwhelming changes into the life of the people, the perception remains that such material and technological innovations do not necessarily lead to spiritual profundity and philosophical depth.

The main focus of technology, religion and culture is the progress of humanity. So the West is primarily focused on the human person – which has both positive and negative consequences. Because of that the West takes human rights seriously and fosters the individual rights of persons as practiced in political system of democracy. Negatively, it ignores the deep-seated connection between the humans and the rest of the universe and gives too much of importance to the human history in the whole cosmic story of the universe.

Some of the contemporary authors who dwells on these traits of the East and West and attempt creative marriages are Fritjof Capra, Deepak Chopra and Ken Wilber.⁵ The New Age Movement, which gains many followers today also subscribe to these stereotypes and try to critique and enrich both East and the West.⁶

These stereotypes of East and West may contain some traces of truth, but not the (whole) truth. They may be regarded as “points of departure,” for our reflection but not the final dwelling place. We need to admit that these stereotypes are in fact lame imageries needing refinement and nuances.

2. Spirituality of Service

Before dwelling on the Mysticism service, it may be good to define or at least describe the term “mysticism.” But since it is a deeply profound term with diverse meanings, we want to leave the term purposely ambiguous, so that we may be able to gain better (or deeper) clarity towards the end of our discussion.

Briefly we can hold that Western Approach to Mysticism is based on service or finding God in fellow humans. So God is experienced in this traditions predominantly through love, care, concern for the others. Here helping others – particularly the poor and the needy – is paramount to finding and experiencing God.

The best example for such a mysticism in the contemporary world is Blessed Mother Teresa of Kolkata, who had dedicated her life fully for the service of the least of the poor.⁷ That she has been so much admired, appreciated and idealized reflects our own hidden desire to reach out to the poor as a spiritual practice.

The Western tradition in general and Christianity in particular try earnestly to experience the “trace of Infinity in the face of the Other.”⁸ So the other – especially the marginalized and the vulnerable – are privileged subjects of devotion and of service. The other is seen as another subject, inviting an I-Thou relationship, since he or she is created in the “image and likeness of God.”⁹ From this perspective every human being is essentially created by God in His own image and likeness, implying that each individual shares in the same dignity and equality of God.

Philosophically this implies that the *Other* is constitutive of me.¹⁰ She is not my rival or competitor but my friend, colleague, companion. She gives me my identity and enables me to become

what I am called to be. In such a situation human relationship and inter-personal communion count most. From this perspective we can say that our human reality is essentially relationship among human beings. The best way of reaching out to my brother or sister is through service and love.

From such a view, it follows matter is created by God and so is sacred. Together with material reality, our human body is noble and is not to be despised. The material world is significant and the affairs of the world (political, cultural and social) are to be respected.¹¹ From the mysticism of Service we can understand the Biblical challenge: “If I do not love my brother whom I can see, how do I love God whom I do not see?” (1 John 4).¹²

3. Spirituality of Silence

Contrary to the Western tradition the spirituality of the Eastern tradition may be regarded as predominantly based on silence.

Silence is not merely the absence of words. Positively, it is a pregnant, fertile silence, which enables us to be deeply in touch with oneself and the true reality. It leads to focusing, concentration and self-discipline.

Maunavrita or the vow of silence is something which many of the sages of India practised on a regular basis. Even Gandhi, one of the most active politician or statesman of India had regular days of complete silence. The meaning behind the vow of silence is not really abstaining from words, activities or distractions. Going deeper silence reflects the absence of ego (*ahambhava*) or the lack of self. It is in fact the absence of being.

Once we affirm the absence of distractions and even ego, once we are in touch without deepest self (or non-self), then we abandon ourselves to the power of nothingness (*sunyata*). Then we are in touch with the powers of the unconscious, the subtle self, the deepest reality. This enables us to acquire tremendous physical and psychological powers.

Thus the mysticism of silence is a call to be truly in touch with the depth of one's being. This is possible though Sustained effort of Meditation and Contemplation and is usually guided by a competent teacher (guru).

In this inward journey into the depth of being inner solitude and deep awareness are helpful. Detached observation and compassionate perception are also means to attain this stage of self-awareness. Though works do not play any significant role self-less action (*nishkama karma*) may contribute to reaching this stage of total Silence or *sunyata* (nothingness understood positively). Here *sunyata* is really extinguishing the fire of being and reaching the state of non-being, whereby one reaches the fullness of being.

In this journey towards the absolute fullness, the yogi realizes the ecstatic union with the Ultimate Reality that is Sat-Cit-Ananda (Being-Consciousness-Bliss).¹³ So the best example for such a spirituality is a yogi who has spent years meditating on the mysteries of life under the foot of the Himalaya mountains who has experienced the Ultimate at the cave of his heart. Ramana Maharshi could be considered an example of this way of life.¹⁴

4. Two Contemporary Sages

The two streams of mysticism – service and silence – that we have reflected on, are two major ways of reaching human fulfillment and encountering the divine fullness. Though we have been speaking of them as the Eastern and Western approaches, they are not to be seen as two ways which are complementary. I would prefer to speak of the tension that needs to be maintained between the “active” and “contemplative” ways of one persons' spiritual journey, both of which distinctly and together lead to the deeper mystical experience.

In this section I want to speak of two persons who have attempted such a creative Interaction between these two traditions: Raimundo Panikkar and Bede Griffiths.

Raimundo Panikkar (1918-2010) was a Christian scientist-priest-philosopher, who was born of a Spanish mother and Indian Father. Roman Catholic priest and a proponent of inter-religious dialogue. As a scholar, he specialized in comparative religion. He made his first trip to India in 1954 where he studied Indian philosophy and religion at the University of Mysore and Banaras Hindu University, where he met several Western monks seeking Eastern forms for the expression of their Christian beliefs. “I left Europe [for India] as a Christian, I discovered I was a Hindu and returned as a Buddhist without ever having ceased to be Christian,” he later wrote.

Panikkar authored more than 40 books and 900 articles. His complete works are being published in Italian. His 1989 Gifford Lectures were very well appreciated and they speak of his anthropocentric vision of reality.¹⁵ The letter he wrote to his friends a few months before his death on January 28, 2010 from Tavertet sums up his own life. He wrote:

Dear Friends . . . I would like to communicate with you that I believe the moment has come, (put off time and again), to withdraw from all public activity, both the direct and the intellectual participation, to which I have dedicated all my life as a way of sharing my reflections. I will continue to be close to you in a deeper way, through silence and prayer, and in the same way I would ask you to be close to me in this last period of my existence. You have often heard me say that a person is a knot in a network of relationships; in taking my leave from you I would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart for having enriched me with the relationship I have had with each of you. I am also grateful to all of those who, either in person or through association, continue working to spread my message and the sharing of my ideals, even without me. Thankful for the gift of life which is only such if lived in communion with others: it is with this spirit that I have lived out my ministry (Panikkar 2010).

Bede Griffiths (1903-93), born Alan Richard Griffiths, (also known by the end of his life as Swami Dayananda - “bliss of compassion”), was a British citizen of Anglican tradition. He became a Catholic and then Benedictine monk and came to India in 1955. There he embraced a Indian Christian theology and lived

in ashrams in South India and became a noted yogi. He has become a leading thinker in the development of the dialogue between Christianity and Hinduism. Griffiths was a part of the Christian Ashram Movement.

When he set out to India, he wrote to a friend: “I am going to discover the other half of my soul.” In 1968, he moved to Shantivanam (“Forest of Peace”) ashram in Tamil Nadu along with another Frenchman, the Abbé Jules Monchanin. The two had developed a religious lifestyle which was completely expressed in authentic Indian fashion, using English, Sanskrit and Tamil in their religious services. They had built the ashram buildings by hand, in the style of the poor of the country.

Mere dialogue can be and often is a casual matter, but the deeper, more substantial type is governed by an intrinsic commitment to finding the point of unity between the two traditions, finding the common ground that permits them to be related in a direct way. Bede Griffiths describes this profounder sort of dialogue, what I call existential dialogue: ‘The primary purpose of inter-religious dialogue is mutual understanding, but this means understanding the other religion from *within*, that is, by sharing the other person’s experience of his religion. This comes about not only through shared conversation but also through sharing in religious rituals and prayer together.’ Existential dialogue is this inner openness to the other in mutual trust, respect and sympathy. But existential convergence goes even deeper (Teasdale 1987: 178).

Though his life and inner experiences, he was convinced that today “inter-religious dialogue is a necessary religious activity”. His basic quest for dialogical encounter with other spiritualities could be autobiographically summed up in his own words:

“I think we have now reached a stage of (long-overdue) religious maturity at which it may be possible for someone to remain perfectly faithful to a Christian and Western monastic commitment, and yet to learn in depth from, say, a Buddhist or Hindu discipline and experience. I believe that some of us need to do this in order to improve the quality of our own monastic life and even to help in the task of monastic renewal which has been undertaken within the Western Church” (Hanson 2006: 9).

5. Spiritual Orientations for Today

Drawing from both the traditions and inspired by the two personalities we have just described, in this section I want to highlight six features, which I hold could be the leading orientations for a spirituality in consonance with our contemporary sensibilities. Here I am purposely being eclectic and also. I draw three features each from the Western and Indian traditions, without in any way claiming to be exhaustive. They may be summed up as: Marketplace, Margins and Materiality from the Western traditions and Basics, Bottom and Beyond from the Indian spiritualities.

a. From the Western Tradition

In terms of three M's we can generally describe them as follows:

Mysticism of the Marketplace: As the name implies the mysticism of the market place is one that deals with ordinary or mundane events, including the trivial aspects of our life. Moving beyond a new age spirituality for the elite, such a mysticism caters to the ordinary people, the hoi polloi or the average human being in their simple, naïve and average existence.

Here the ordinary and normal concerns of the people become the focus of our spiritual life. So one of the greatest Catholic theologians of the last century, Karl Rahner, speaks of a "theology of everyday things."¹⁶ Such an attitude is an invitation to perceive the extra-ordinary in the ordinary things of life. So Rahner calls for a new age in Christian spirituality when he wrote that "the devout Christian of the future will either be a 'mystic' ... or he will cease to be anything at all." (Rahner & Imhof 1960: 7, 15).

Mysticism of the Margins: Connected to the spirituality of the marketplace is the rediscovery of the margins. A spirituality of the margins appreciates the deeper life of the superficial.¹⁷ Here the insignificant and the outcasts becomes the centre of our mysticism. In fact the very concept of centre itself can be taken out of our spiritual world. The superficial, the unimportant and

the everyday realities of life, as opposed to the important, fundamental or central issues, are brought to the surface and celebrated. So the real depth of one's life may be equated to the depth.¹⁸

It is here that we can appreciate the Self-emptying or kenosis of Jesus Christ. If he becomes a "sign of contradiction," it is precisely because he has overturned the values of this world and established that the marginalised are as much loved and accepted by the Father as the privileged or the elite.

From such a perspective, we realise that ultimately everything in our religious life is graced. It is a gratuitously given gift, over which we do not have any right. We cannot achieve it, nor can we demand it. So we can appreciate Paul Knitter's significant insight: "To be deeply religious is to be broadly religious" (Knitter 2003).

Mysticism of Materiality: Contemporary spirituality also gives importance of this world, without absolutising it. It prices our body without idolizing it. It looks at the significance of Being human with its bodily dimension, without neglecting the spiritual aspect of life. In fact it acknowledges that we are called to be "being-in-the-world" (*Dasein*) and our body our world are essential constituents of life.

This calls for respecting the material and the bodily aspects of our life. Modras describes materiality as advocated by Karl Rahner as follows:

Human beings are not made up of separate bodies and souls; even less are we souls laden down with bodies like so much baggage. From the beginning of his theological career, Rahner argued for the essential unity of spirituality and materiality in the human person. Our loftiest, most abstract ideas are rooted in our sense experiences and imagination. The same is true of our most sublime moral decisions. Ours is a sensate spirituality, which must exist in matter in order to be spirit. We exercise our spirituality not by trying to escape the material world and the persons around us, but by reaching out to them (Modras 2004: 216).

That enables us to commit ourselves to the environment, to the cosmos and to this worldly concerns, without in any way reducing spirituality to this world.

b. From the Indian Tradition

From the Silence tradition we may draw the following key ideas (in terms of three B's) for contemporary men and women.

Focusing on the Basics: We need to relatives at least some part of our reality. As such we cannot run after everything that glitters or be fascinated by it without any boundaries or limits. Since certain limits are necessary for proper growth and maturation, we also need to acknowledge some broad and flexible “checks and balances” or boarders. This urges us to set our priorities properly in our spiritual quest and to be able to discern the various choices given to us. We need to discern the real from the unreal, the just from the unjust, the good from the evil. In that sense, we need to focus on the basics so that at the individual and collective level, we can grow within bounds.

Getting to the Bottom: Since we need to set priorities in life, we also need to be open to experience the depth dimension of our be existence. In a world where we are constantly bombarded by external stimuli, it is challenging to get to the roots of an issue or even a cause. We need to discover that unwavering aspect of our life, which along can give us roots. To be grounded in reality and so connected to the whole demand that at least sometimes we can get to the bottom of ourselves and be unwavering in our convictions about the non-negotiable aspects of our lives.

Being Beyond: Connected with getting to the bottom of things is also the urge to free oneself and go beyond all boundaries. The longing to take wings and to soar high is equally part of our spiritual quest. This longing for the Infinite embedded deep within us enables us to “pilgrims” on the way, who are always open to the otherwise.

Since God is believed to transcend all names, forms and categories, it is easy for us to realize the need to go beyond our concepts and imaginations, which in a way are limiting the Ultimate. Thus the God we surrender ourselves to is beyond our conceptions and we take wings and reach out to the infinite various ways.

6. Conclusion: Dialogue as Way of Life

We have studied the two different types of mysticism and traced some orientations from both of them. We plead for a dialogue or convergence between the two types of mysticism, without eliminating any one of them.¹⁹

We need to accept that even through dialogue and interaction the basic differences in spirituality won't and shouldn't vanish. They are here to stay, basically because human beings are essentially different. At the same time, we need to be sensitive to other ways of relating to God, to fellow human beings and to nature, which should in turn purify and enrich our own spirituality.

Despite the need to maintain their difference and identity, there is also a religious need to enter into a creative dialogue of silence and that of service. In this dialogue, we not only sit in meditation together, we act together. Such action begins first with identifying the forms of suffering – human as well as ecological – that are calling each of us. Who or where, in our own context or in our own world, is the child about to fall into the well whom we all want to help? And then we will deliberate together about what can or must be done. Then, we will roll up our sleeves and act together, struggle together as we try to listen to and work with the victims of this world. In such acting and struggling together, we will become aware of the bonds that unite us as brothers and sisters; we will hear the same Voice that is calling us in the voices of the victims.

But, in such a dialogue of service, we will also become aware of our differences. For although there is one voice calling us to

serve, each of us – Buddhists, Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Jews – will have different views of how to respond to suffering, how to confront injustice, how to deal with hatred and violence, how to change society and the world. But, as has been my limited experience, these real differences between us will usually turn out to be more complementary than contradictory. We will learn from our differences. Why? Because what is animating and guiding us in this dialogue of service is not the desire to prove that our view is more true or better than yours, but how we can all help the victims who have called us together – how we can help the children who are about to fall into the well.

In such a mystical dialogue that respects both silence and service we can deepen the spiritual unity of our religious communities and at the same time, further the worldly well-being of all creatures. Truly such a dialogue takes into considerations the yearnings of human beings from all aspects of life, of all living beings as well as the whole cosmos.

Finally, such an engaging and respectful dialogue may enable each one of us to realize our own spiritual strength and realize that we are all intimately related to each other and to the Divine. For we are all sons and daughters of God. All of us are moving towards authenticity, fulfillment and redemption. Without realizing it we are mystics. As the mystic Teasdale holds:

Every one of us is a mystic. We may or may not realize it, we may not even like it. But whether we know it or not, whether we accept it or not, mystical experience is always there, inviting us on a journey of ultimate discovery. We have been given the gift of life in this perplexing world to become who we ultimately are: creatures of boundless love, caring compassion, and wisdom. Existence is a summons to the eternal journey of the sage - the sage we all are, if only we could see (Teasdale 1999: 4).

The task of a social worker today is to realize this mysticism of the ordinary things in her own works and ambience. It is to permeate such a deep spirituality to the people around her so that they can experience the depth of the divine, that radiates to the ordinary things of their life, making their social life truly humane.

Notes

1. Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Jainism are the four mainstream religions having their origin in India.
2. Two good examples are Amarty Sen (Sen 2005) and John Vattanky (Vattanky 1984). Professor Vattanky is an expert on Gangesa and has spent more than forty years of his life immersing himself into the unfathomable and sophisticated depth of Indian logic, commonly called navya-nyaya logic and Gangesa, only a couple of scholars will really understand.
3. These stages could be derived from Auguste Comte (1798-1857), a French philosopher and founder of both sociology and positivism. His “ positive philosophy “ is essentially an anti-metaphysical philosophy of “ popular good sense “ (common sense). Central to this is the claim that human history progresses through three stages of development [a] (which he compares fancifully to the three stages of an individual 's life — infancy, youth, and maturity). These are, however, general tendencies; he recognises the need for some flexibility in his classification, in the light of actual facts. (1) The theological stage. This is the period when early man, after an animist or ‘fetish ’ stage, sought to find ultimate causes of phenomena in the decisions or wills of superhuman beings (later of only one such being). (2) The metaphysical stage. In this stage man no longer thinks in terms of a supernatural personal God but of an ‘abstraction ’, such as all-embracing Nature, and looks to such notions as ether, vital principles, forces to explain phenomena. (3) The positive stage. Explanation in the final stage is supposed to be found by bringing facts of experience under general descriptive laws. These are arrived through a process of testing by direct observation — verification shows the hypotheses to be genuine. Such laws will then enable man to predict and control nature. At a higher level philosophy seeks to achieve a synthesis of all the sciences [b]. Positive knowledge, though certain, is only relative in that it is of the world as appearance. It is also confined to the phenomena; we can know nothing of any ultimate causes or metaphysical principles [c]. Comte 's three stages are thus represented as a sequence of progressively more mature or sophisticated kinds of explanation of phenomena.

Corresponding to each of the three periods are also, Comte says, three kinds of social organizations (though again he allows for a degree of flexibility in the application of his classification). (1) In the Ancient world and the Middle Ages we find an acceptance of an absolute authority, divine right of kings, or militarism. The ethos of such societies

might be said to be conquest. (2) The Enlightenment era is characterized by belief in abstract rights, popular sovereignty, the rule of law. The emphasis is on defence. (3) The modern period is that of the industrial society, in which the emphasis is on a centralized economy organized by a 'scientific' elite. The key word is now labour. See (Harrison-Barbet)

4. The Industrial Revolution is roughly the period from 1750 to 1850 where changes in agriculture, manufacturing, mining, transportation, and technology had a profound effect on the social, economic and cultural conditions of the times. It began in Great Britain, then subsequently spread throughout Western Europe, Northern America, Japan, and eventually the rest of the world.
5. For details see (Capra 2010 ; Chopra 1994 , 2008 ; Chopra & Simon 2004 ; Wilber 1977 , 1979 , 1980)
6. In a slightly different vein Ken Wilber writes: " In fact, at this point in history, the most radical, pervasive, and earth-shaking transformation would occur simply if everybody truly evolved to a mature, rational, and responsible ego, capable of freely participating in the open exchange of mutual self-esteem. There is the 'edge of history.' There would be a *real* New Age. " (Wilber 1983: 238) 238
7. An Indian appraisal of the saint is given by (Rai 2004) . 8 See (Bloechl 2000). See especially p. 64. This profound notion is inspired by the Jewish philosophers Emmanule Levinas and Jacques Derrida.
9. *Imago Dei* (" image of God ") is a theological term, applied uniquely to humans, which denotes the symbolical relation between God and humanity. It is based on the Biblical verse : And God said, " Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. " And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. (Gen 1: 26-27)
10. "The otherness of the other must be each time particular. Since responsiveness is constitutive of me as a subjectivity, Levinas depicts ethical acts, responsive initiatives, done by me as the acts that are genuinely my acts." (Stauffer & Bergo 2009) See p.26
11. Theology of the body addresses these concerns. See especially (Copeland 2010 ; Doyle 2009 ; Joy & Duggan 2012) . Further, theologians have been perceiving the tension between the Kingdom of God and material prosperity. They are neither identical nor distinct!

12. There are some prominent exceptions to this general classifications. Mystics like John of the Cross, Teresa of Avila of the Western tradition, it may be noted, have a necessarily social dimension (of service).
13. Here the great sayings of the Upanisads or Mahavakya (*Aham Brahmasmi* – I am Brahman –; *Tatvam asi* –That thou art –) which imply the absolute identity of the self with God are relevant. Further it may be noted that there are some great exceptions in India to the spirituality of silence. Though the great Gandhi and Vinoba Bhave were men of silence, their commitment to the people followed from their deep interiority and so they were socially minded sages.
14. Ramana Maharshi (1879-1950), born Venkataraman Iyer, was a spiritual master. He was born to a Tamil-speaking Brahmin family in Tiruchuzhi, Tamil Nadu . “ Your own self-realization is the greatest service you can render the world.”
15. See very specially (Panikkar 2010) .
16. The theologian Ronald Modras reflects on Karl Rahner ’s writings. “It provides as clear an insight into the man as he ever wrote and a key to what lies at the heart of his theology. ... Writing on such mundane matters as working, sleeping, laughing, and eating, he created as well a “*theology of everyday things*.” (Modras 2004: 200) .
17. This idea is inspired from postmodernity . See (Pandikattu 2008) .
18. Perceived thus the “Sermon on the Mount,” (Matt 5: 1-13) makes sense. For there. “Blessed are the poor in spirit ‘who come unto me,’ for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”
19. “Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet. “ Rudyard Kipling ‘The Ballad of East and West ’ (1889), the opening line. Here, Kipling is lamenting the gulf of understanding between the British and the inhabitants of the Indian subcontinent. See (Kipling 1889). More of it is elaborated in the book (Pandikattu 2001) .

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Religion, Spirituality and Ethics in Social Work: Exploring the Connections

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This paper is an attempt to explore the connections between religion, spirituality and ethics in the paradigm of professional social work. In the first part I will present an overview of historical trends of the connection between spirituality, religion and social work profession. Then I will give the definitions of the terms religion, spirituality and ethics as found and widely used in the literature on social work profession. In the second part I will draw on some ideas about ethico-spiritual paradigm of social work.

To understand religion and spirituality in professional social work, it will be proper to briefly discuss the role of religion in today's world, the nature of spirituality, and the historical trends of connection between religion, spirituality and social work.

1. Religion and Spirituality in Today's World

Religion has very important role in determining the lives of individual and the formations of structures of present society. It has always been holding important position in the socio-political milieu. This can be understood from the religious forces at work throughout the world. The major happenings such as the interest of the west in Buddhism and eastern spirituality, the Islamic resistance in Afghanistan and its support from Islamic countries, the establishment and continued support of Israel by Judaism, the role Christianity played in the upheavals of Eastern Europe, inter-

religious (communalism) and intra-religious (caste based) conflicts in India, a call for vengeance in the name of Islamic *fatwa*, and the rapid growth of Christianity and Islam in the subcontinents of Africa are indicative to know the role of religion in present socio-politico milieu.

Religion plays important role in social life of an individual. Common beliefs and shared experiences are the basis for a community. The religious community share common beliefs, symbols, rituals, rhetoric and scripture. Such common beliefs and traditions normally help in developing cultural norms within a religious community regarding observances of important days, diet, feast and festivals, marriage, political ideology, etc.

Religion shows strong cohesive power, as it plays a particularly significant role in giving distinct identity. Persecuted because of their religion, Jews have maintained a sense of cultural and religious identity in spite of anti-Semitism throughout history (Dubois 1999: 192). Empirical studies (such as Zelliott 1977; Burra 1984; Jogdand 1991) in Indian context show that the Neo-Buddhist movement among Mahars has provided for both the distinct identity and a sense of belonging. Such a distinct identity leads to formation of association or alliance with social or political colour.

Spirituality and Religion: Definitions and Distinctions

The term spirituality is familiar to all of us. Hence we take for granted that we know what it means. It's important to clarify what we mean by "Spirituality" and "religion" before thinking specifically about how they might be part of the social work practice. The dictionary defines spirit as: animating force; incorporeal consciousness, i.e., lacking material form or substance, intangible [out-of-body experience]; heavenly mindedness; and that which "belongs to the church". The spirituality is defined as the 'state of being concerned with the soul'. This does not really help us to understand the meaning. While referring to spirituality often people say that they were seeking or had a spiritual experience. In this they usually talk about (1) a feeling or

experience of unity or closeness with God or whatever they regarded as eternal and transcendent, or (2) a feeling or experience of lightness or joy, absence of mundane consciousness, and diminution of anxiety and fear. For some people, spiritual experiences are described in terms such as enlightenment, cosmic-consciousness, harmony with the universe, or communion with God.

In literature we find various explanations and definitions for spirituality. In the context of social work there has been explanations in which the terms spirituality and religion are commonly used. Spirituality was often equated with sectarian religious beliefs and practices, usually of a Christian or Jewish form (Canda, 1997). According to Canda (1998, 1999), spirituality involves understanding the interconnectedness of all people; compassionate concern rises from soulful awareness of interconnectedness and the realization that self and others are inseparable. Spirituality moves us towards the realization of integration of all our aspects while being in connection and communication with all others.

In India, spirituality is a *marga* or way of knowledge (*Jnana*), love (*Bhakti*) and action (*Karma*). A way supposes a goal towards which one is on the way. The goal is imaged as the realization of the Self. The Self is complex concept that includes God or the Ultimate as the center of Being, but also the human person or self in whom the Self is present and becomes manifest. In the Self, the self is related to other selves and to the whole universe (Amaladoss, 1997). It is proclaimed that man is essentially a spiritual being. His physical possessions and physical satisfactions, i.e. *artha* and *kama* are not the only objects to be sought by him. He has also to acquire *dharma* and *moksha*, i.e. moral and spiritual fulfillment of life. In this sense, spirituality involves the search for a sense of life purpose, meaning, and fulfilling relationships between oneself, other people, the universe, and the ultimate ground of reality, however one understands it. Thus Spirituality is an aspect of the person. Spirituality moves us toward realization

of the integration of all our aspects into a whole being in connection and communion with all other beings.

Religion as commonly understood is a formal set of beliefs, doctrines, laws, practices, rituals, and assignments of authority, which are linked to an explanation of the creation and governance of the universe. The basic definition of “religion” is to bind, in the sense that we are bound to the promises we make. So it is that virtually all religions seek to bind their members or followers to vows or covenants of acceptance. In this sense religions are institutionalized and organized patterns of belief, morals, rituals, and social support systems. Religions are shared by groups of people and are formed and transmitted over time. Thus it is an association or alliance. Ambedkar (Moon 1989, IV: 407- 9) in his writings argued that religion is social ‘in the sense that it primarily concerns society’. He separated religion from theology and argued that the primary things in religion are the usages, practices and observances, rites and rituals. Theology is secondary’. Religion is not supernatural, but its primary content is social. According to him religion like language is social for the reason that either is essential for social life and the individual has to have it because without it he cannot participate in the life of the society’. Religion emphasizes, universalizes social values and brings them to the mind of the individual who is required to recognize them in all his acts in order that he may function as an approved member of the society.

The connection between spirituality and religion is often argued. Spirituality and religion are separate, though often related, dimensions. Spirituality can be defined, as “the general human experience of developing a sense of meaning, purpose, and morality” Key components of spirituality are the personal search for meaning in life, a sense of identity, and a value system. In contrast, religion refers to the formal institutional contexts of spiritual beliefs and practices (Zastrow 2000: 113). An organized religion encompasses formal beliefs and practices held in common with others. Often religious beliefs evolve within a particular

religious denomination and may involve affiliation with a religious body such as a Church, synagogue, temple, or mosque. People can and do raise spiritual questions or questions about meaning in their lives outside the purview of organized religion. In the present pluralistic world it is found that some people support the teachings of their own community of faith, following the rituals and religious practices and yet holds personal beliefs that are entirely different from that faith or even contradictory to it. Often they call this phenomenon as understanding of difference between religion and spirituality.

2. Religion and Social Work: Historical Linkages

Religion has certainly played a central role in the development of social work as a profession (Midgley & Sanzenbach 1989). Historically, Social Work has its roots in religious organizations. It was originated under the inspiration of the Judeo-Christian religious traditions of its philanthropic founders. The Charity Organization Society and the settlement house movement originated through the work of clergy. Later, the American social gospel movement played a key role in supporting the development of public social services and a legislative remedy for social problems (Dubois 1999: 197).

Midgley (1989) has given the detail account of the role played by religiously inspired individuals and organisation in the emergence of social work in the Western industrial countries during the nineteenth century. A Scottish clergyman, Thomal Chalmers, is generally acknowledged to have formulated the basic principles of social visiting which subsequently evolved into social casework (Young and Ashton, 1956). The clergy were will represented among the formative leadership of the Charity Organisation Society, and it was another clergyman, the Revd Stephen Gurtee, who first imported the Charity Organisation Society concept to the United States (Leiby, 1978). Yet another clergyman, Samuel Barnett, conceived the idea of the settlement house while serving in St. Jude's Parish in the East End of London.

Barnett was also known for his progressive, reformist activities and, aligned with the Fabians, he supported state intervention in the economy and in social affairs (Bruce, 1961). In this regard, his work paralleled the progressive reformism of the American Social Gospel movement which championed the creation of public social services, and the extension of legislative authority to remedy social problems (White and Hopkins, 1976).

Religious ideas have also informed the development of social work's concepts, and particularly its values and ethics. Biestek's (1957) exposition of social casework which emphasized compassion, love, understanding and acceptance is perhaps the best example of the infusion of religious notions into social work (Midgley and Sanzenbach: 1989). The welfare services during the initial period of the profession were more in the nature of amelioration, by and large carried out by semi-religious organizations and well-intended philanthropic citizens (Vakharia 1999: 8).

In India also the religious organizations, and indigenous religious movements have played a major role in the development of social work. The major schools of social work in India were founded under religious auspices and they combined a religious orientation with secular professional education. Missionaries of American Marathi Mission established the first school of social work in Asia - Tata Institute of Social Sciences at Mumbai. It was Dr. Manshardt of Marathi mission who conceived the idea, prepared the blue print and provided leadership during its formation stage. Among other schools are the Delhi School of Social Work at Delhi University founded by the YWCA, the Department of Social Work at Vidyalaya Arts college in Tamil Nadu, founded by the Shri Ramkrishna Mission, Center for Studies in Rural Development, Ahmednagar, founded by the Missionaries of American Marathi Mission, Nirmala Niketan at Mumbai, Loyola College, Madras Christian College, Rajgiri college of social work and St. Mary's the department of social work, all started by catholic missionaries, Jain Vishwa Bharati Institute (Deemed

University) at Ladnun, came into being, under the inspiration of “Gurudev Tulsi” the ninth Acharya, the Supreme Head of the Jain Terapanth religious sect, and though not religious in the usual sense of the word, the schools at Gujrat Vidyapith and Vishwa-Bharati drew inspiration from the moral philosophical teachings of Gandhi and Tagore.

In the literature there has been attempts to establish that the major religions show compatibility with social work. Canda (1988) has argued, that the teachings of Judaism, Shamanism and Zen Buddhism are highly compatible with social work and should be incorporated into professional practice. According to Mazumdar (1999: 72) ‘the basic tenets of Hinduism and the cardinal values of social work flow from one common premise, that is upholding the dignity of the human being’. Liberation from enslaving conditions has been one of the goals of Hinduism that has endured down the centuries (Chethimattam 1974:6). Liyanage (1974) in his article on “Buddhism and Social Work Education” shows the relationship between Social Work values and Buddhism not only in work with individuals and groups but also in tackling social policy and planning issues at macro level. The teachings of Buddhism give values of *ahimsa* (non-violence), *karuna* (compassion and benevolence), and *Samata* (equality). These values form integral part of social work values. Basic Islamic concepts likewise are shown as much related to social work values as well and to the larger issues of development (Darwish 1974). Hasegawa (1974) discusses that Zen Buddhism reminds us the importance of meditation, through which the inner eye is kept open to the universe, deep insight into one’s humanity attained, and compassion for other and public welfare is born. Desai (1974) has pointed out that Zoroastrianism clearly enjoins social work and social action in relation to society’s problems.

3. Spirituality and Social work: Connectivity and Trends

Spirituality for its connections with social work has been a matter of discussion throughout the development of social work. During the recent years there is promising literature from the West (Canda, 1998; 2002; Canda & Dyrud Furman, 1999; Hickson & Phelps, 1998; Powers, 1995; Radford Ruether, 1995; Ressler, 1998; Roberts, 1999; Asher, 2001) on the subject of spirituality in social work and spiritually sensitive social work practice. We will now present the historical trends of connection between spirituality and social work.

In the literature we find different phases of discussion on the matter of spirituality and social work. Canda and Furman (1999) have identified three broad phases in the development of connections between spirituality and social work in the United States. In the first phase, up to the early twentieth century, social services and charities that addressed spirituality were mostly based on Christian and Jewish sectarian beliefs and institutions. The governmental social welfare systems often drew on these religious traditions implicitly or explicitly. But also, some prominent advocates of social welfare and social justice, such as Jane Addams, promoted humanistic and nonsectarian approaches. In the second phase (1920s to 1970s), as social work formed into a profession and the governmental social welfare system became more extensive, professional social work education became gradually separated from explicit religious connections. Professional skepticism grew about the dangers of religious proselytization, moralistic judgmentalism, threats to separation of church and state, and theological explanations of human behavior and social problems. By the 1970s, the topics of spirituality and religion had taken the flipside in social work education. However, social work services continued to be provided within various sectarian agencies. Social work literature included occasional calls for addressing religion or spirituality and some new spiritual

perspectives were being introduced, such as existential and humanistic spiritual perspectives and Zen Buddhism.

During phase three (1980s through 1990s), there was an increase of calls in the social work literature and professional conferences to reconnect with our roots in spiritual perspectives. Religion-specific approaches to social work continued, but what was new in this third phase was a clear articulation of the need for approaches to spirituality in social work that are respectful, knowledgeable, and inclusive of diverse religious and nonreligious spiritual perspectives. During the 1990s, the Society for Spirituality and Social Work and other networks were established to link up and synergize the various kinds of scholarly and practitioner approaches to spirituality in the United States. The pace of publications in social work on spirituality increased dramatically (Canda et al., 1999), the Council on Social Work Education re-introduced language about spirituality and religion into its accreditation standards, and the number of MSW educational programs around the country with courses on spirituality increased significantly (Russel, 1998). Many social work practitioners and educators remained unaware of these developments, but momentum and conspicuous visibility of spirituality in social work grew tremendously (Canda, 2002).

Canda (2002) in this new century have added a fourth phase of development in Spirituality and social work. During the 1990s, leaders in religion-specific approaches to social work (for example, Buddhist, Christian, Islamic, Jewish, and First Nations) increased international networking. The Society for Spirituality and Social Work, dedicated to respectful inclusion of diverse religious and nonreligious spiritual perspectives, held its first international conference in 1990. A series of annual international symposia on spirituality and social work also began during this time under the auspices of the Inter-University Center of Dubrovnik, Croatia. This trend has accelerated around the world up to the present.

Ethics in Social Work

It is important at this juncture to define the term 'ethics' as used in the context of social work profession. "Ethics is moral philosophy or philosophical thinking about morality, moral problems, and moral judgments" (Frankena, 1973, p.4). Ethics is hence knowledge based and moral judgments, which involve the criteria of right and wrong, are derived from this knowledge. Every profession is characterized by a perspective and set of beliefs and by a collective conscience with which to make these beliefs stick. We call this a *professional philosophy*. It provides a rationale, articles of faith, and ideals by which to work and to give meaning to one's work. Also provided are certain essential models and standards for use in describing and measuring reality, and in the making of moral- evaluative judgments. These later kinds of standards we call norms, precepts, or moral and ethical principles. Social work philosophy is primarily a moral and social philosophy, an axiology and ethics. The distinctive and characteristic social philosophy that has evolved within social work is marked by a set of basic value orientations, norms, and ethical principles that are held in common by professional social workers. The ethical practice principles are accepted as obligations, standards, duties, and responsibilities for application in all helping relationships and situations, with clients, collateral others, and professional colleagues (Siporin, 1972 p.62, 74).

In social work the values and ethics have been central since its formal inception. Historical accounts of the profession's development routinely focus on the compelling importance of social work's value base and ethical principles. Although the theme of values and ethics has endured in the profession, social workers' conceptions of what these terms mean and of their influence on practice have changed over time. The evolution of social work values and ethics has had several key stages (Reamer, 1998). In the first stage during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, social work was much more concerned about the morality of the client than about the morality or ethics of the profession or its

practitioners. Organising relief and responding to the “curse of pauperism” were the profession’s principal missions. This preoccupation often took the form of paternalistic attempts to strengthen the morality or rectitude of the poor whose “wayward” lives had gotten the best of them. In the second key stage during early twentieth century, the aims and value orientations of many social workers shifted from concern about the morality, or immorality, of the poor to the need for dramatic social reform designed to ameliorate a wide range of social problems. The third key stage which began in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the concern focused much more on the morality or ethics of the profession and of its practitioners. This was a significant shift when in 1947 the Delegate Conference of the American Association of Social Workers adopted a code of ethics. In the 1960s social workers shifted considerable attention toward the ethical constructs of social justice, rights, and reform. This was the beginning of the fourth key stage in the evolution of social work values and ethics. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) adopted its first code of ethics in 1960. (Reamer, 1999).

Religion, Spirituality and Ethics: The Connectivity

Let’s explore the connectivity between religion, spirituality and ethics in the context of social work profession. As we presented above spirituality and religion are separate though there are often attempts to combine them. Spirituality if considered as an experience or feeling of unity or closeness with God, it becomes very personal aspect of an individual. This experience moves the person towards the integration of all the aspects of his being in connection and communication with all others. This is realization of the true nature i.e. man is a spiritual being. This experience is often said to be beyond comprehension or explanation. Israel Salanter, a 19 century rabbi, wrote: “Spirituality is like a bird: if you hold onto it tightly, it chokes; if you hold onto it loosely, it escapes”—which sounds like a very tricky business. Possibly he was trying to explain that the experience of unity with God is not

something to be organized or captured. Whenever there is an attempt to organize this spiritual experience in the institutional context, it takes the form of a sect or religion.

Thus, religion refers to the formal institutional contexts of beliefs and practices. Religions are shared by groups of people and often are group affiliations. To make these group affiliation stronger and organized religions needs some binding force. Therefore all religions seek to bind their members or followers to vows or covenants of acceptance. These vows embrace acceptance of authority, acceptance of belief systems, and acceptance of definitions of appropriate individual and collective behaviour. In this context ethics as moral judgments, which involve the criteria of right or wrong, becomes an essential for organized religions.

In professional social work somewhat similar to religions we attempt to organize, formalize and apply values (such as compassion, love, justice, etc.) on a large scale through professional ethics. By doing so social work as a helping profession trying to establish a monopoly on helping. Often through the code of ethics social work try to legislate it, control it and sell it.

Ethico-Spiritual Social Work: Points of View

Based on the discussion above I would like to present some points with regard to the ethico-spiritual paradigm. Firstly, the historical facts and trends shows that religion has certainly played a central role in the development of social work as a profession. Religious ideas have informed the development of social work's concepts, and particularly its values and ethics. There have been attempts to establish that the major religions show compatibility with social work. Social workers and religious professionals often perform functions complementary to each other. They are significant sources of referrals to each other. Individuals mostly seek initial guidance from their priest or clergy at the time of crisis. The social work profession in the process of helping the client may and do make use of the resources available through the religious community. These facts show that religion and social

work goes hand in hand, they support the survival of each other and in the process social work gives an impression of a sectarian image.

Secondly, spirituality and religion are separate phenomenon. Spirituality is beyond religion and it cannot be organized. Spiritual experience leads the people to naturally relate with themselves, all fellow beings and the great mystery that infuses all. One might say that spirituality is conscious living. Awareness and living naturally yield a sense of love, compassion and service. Religion is more of organized and institutional context. However in the context of social work the terms spirituality and religion are commonly used. Spirituality was often equated with sectarian religious beliefs and practices, usually of a Christian or Jewish form.

Thirdly, Spirituality if considered as an experience or feeling of unity or closeness with God, it becomes very personal aspect of an individual. This experience is often said to be beyond comprehension or explanation. Whenever there is an attempt to organize this spiritual experience in the institutional context, it takes the form of a sect or religion. Religions are shared by groups of people and often are group affiliations. To make these group affiliation stronger and organized religions needs some binding force. In this context ethics as moral judgments, which involve the criteria of right or wrong, becomes an essential for organized religions.

Fourthly, the compassionate help and love are our natural way of life. Compassion is the source of all genuine helping, whether informal or professional. Ways of compassion existed even before professional helping. Natural compassion is our human nature. Mencius said that if any person with a humane heart sees a baby dangerously close to falling into a well, that person will automatically go to save that child. This is a natural response, arising from our sense of fundamental connectedness. But with the code of ethics we become dependent on social constructs of morality and lose our true nature. Natural compassion is reduced

to artificial, interventions as we become role-bound, rule-bound, categorized and socially controlled. Lao Tze, the Chinese founder of Taoism, paradoxically said that immorality and cruelty came into being when codes of conduct and social control were invented.

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Religion, Spirituality and Social Work Ethics: The Indian Perspective

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The phenomenon of globalization has changed Indian people's world into a place of abundance and plenty. On the one hand, unprecedented growth of the knowledge and privileges of man have been taking place, and on the other hand, restlessness and maddening tensions have also increased. The mental deformity impulse opposing ethical values and the destructive instincts are on the rise. People in general are being confronted with concerns such as trauma, illness, insomnia, stress, depression, substance abuse, aggressiveness, violence, suicide, loss or grief etc. In such situation people may likely to seek solace in spiritual and religious beliefs and support systems as it provides relief to their body and peace to their mind.

It is common observation in India that people; irrespective of intellectual or illiterate are happier discussing their personal psycho-social problems with priests, astrologers, tantrics etc, than competent social workers. People have no hesitation in paying them. Therefore the "Religion and Spirituality" of the client in India is an important issue to be acknowledged.

India, the second most populous country in the world, with over 1.21 billion people (Census, 2011),¹ is the birth place of four of the world’s major religious traditions; namely Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism (Deka 2007: 135).

Name of Religion	Percentage of Population	Sex Ratio F/M
Hindu	80.5	931
Muslim	13.4	936
Christian	2.3	1009
Sikhs	1.9	893
Buddhists	0.8	953
Jains	0.4	940
Other religions	0.6	992
India	100	933

Table 1: Distribution of Population by Religious groups and their sex ratio in India (Census 2001)

A vast majority of Indian people associate themselves with a religion. According to the 2001 census, Devotees of Hinduism, a varied grouping of philosophical and devotional traditions officially numbered 687.6 million people or 80.5% of the population of India. Buddhism and Jainism, the ancient monastic traditions, have had a major influence on Indian art, philosophy, and society and remain important minority religions in the late twentieth century. Buddhists represented 0.8 percent of the total population while Jains represented 0.4 percent in 2001 census. Significantly, the Muslim population, 13.4 per cent in India is the third largest in the world. India also has the largest population of people adhering to Zoroastrianism and Bahá’í Faith anywhere in the world (Chary 2009: 31). Throughout Indian history, religion has been an important part of the country’s culture. Religious diversity and religious tolerance have deep historical roots which are established in the country by law and custom.

This Paper makes an effort to substantiate these theoretical assumptions about Religion, Spirituality and Ethics of Social Work from Indian perspective.

Understanding Indian Religious Traditions and Systems

“Religion” refers to organized structures that centre around particular belief, behavior and traditions. In India, on a day-to-day basis, the vast majority of people engage in ritual actions that are motivated by religious systems that owe much to the past but are continuously evolving. Religion, then, is one of the most important facets of Indian history and contemporary life. The major religious traditions of India i.e. Hinduism, Sikhism and Jainism have more or less common sets of beliefs. There are four main religious beliefs that need to be referred to 1. *Karma*, 2. *Dharma*, 3. *Reincarnation* and 4. *Salvation*

1. Karma

Karma is the concept of “act” or “deed”, and that which causes the entire cycle of cause and effect (i.e., the cycle called *saCsâra*) that governs all life. This has originating in ancient India and treated in Hindu, Jain, Buddhist and Sikh philosophy (Singla 2009: 5). Karma can easily be described as for every action there is a consequence. Karma is also seen as the gateway of opportunities for deserving. If good fortune comes the way that mean the person have a good karma, and vice versa, bad fortune equal to bad karma. Karma is not punishment or retribution but simply an extended expression or consequence of natural acts. The effects experienced are also able to be mitigated by actions and are not necessarily fated. The belief of Karma does not believe to be a short term; however, it carries on from this life onto the next. Thus *Karma* is often used as an explanation for positive or negative occurrences in one’s life, thus easing the acceptance of adversities as well as disappointments in life. The law of Karma, which is the law of cause and effect, continues through lifetimes.

In Sikhism, all living beings are described as being under the influence of *maya*'s {illusion} Sanskrit roots *ma* ("not") and *ya*, generally translated as an indicative article meaning "that". Due to the influence of *maya*'s nature; *jivas* (individual beings) perform activities under the control and purview of the eternal time. These activities are called "karma". The underlying principle is that karma is the law that brings back the results of actions to the person performing them.

In Buddhism, karma (Pâli *kamma*) is strictly distinguished from *vipâka*, meaning "fruit" or "result". Most types of karmas, with good or bad results, will keep one within the wheel of *amadhi*, while others will liberate one to *nirvana* (Kuhn 2004). In Jainism, {*Tattvarthasutra*} *Karma* is described as "a mechanism that makes us thoroughly experience the themes of our life until we gained optimal knowledge from them and until our emotional attachment to these themes falls off."

2. Dharma

Dharma means accepting one's place in the society. In the context of Hinduism, it refers to one's personal obligations, calling and duties. A Hindu's *dharma* is affected by the person's age, caste, class, occupation, and gender (Brodd 2003). The idea of *dharma* as duty or propriety derives from an idea found in India's ancient legal and religious texts that there is a divinely instituted natural order of things and justice, social harmony and human happiness require that human beings discern and live in a manner appropriate to the requirements of that order.

According to the various Indian religious literatures, beings that live in accordance with *dharma* proceed more quickly toward *dharma yukam*, *moksha* or *nirvana* (personal liberation). In traditional Hindu society, *dharma* has historically denoted a variety of ideas, such as Vedic ritual, ethical conduct, caste rules, and civil and criminal law. It's most common meaning however pertains to two principal ideals: that social life should be structured through well-defined and well-regulated classes

(*varna*), and that an individual's life within a class should be organized into defined stages of life (*ashrama*) (Embree, Hay and Bary 1988: 215). Through the four stages of life (Brahmacharya, Grihastha, Vaanprastha, Sanyaasa), a person also seeks to fulfill the four essentials (*purucârtha-human goal*) of *kama* (sensual pleasures), *artha* (worldly gain), *dharma*, and *moksha* (liberation from reincarnation or rebirth). Moksha, although the ultimate goal, is emphasized more in the last two stages of life, while *artha* and *kama* are considered primary only during Grihastha. *Dharma*, however is essential in all four stages. As a *purucârtha* (human goal), *dharma* can also be considered to be a lens through which humans plan and perform their interactions with the world. Through the *dharma* lens, one focuses on doing what is right and avoiding what is wrong, while the *kama* perspective focuses on doing what is pleasurable (in many senses, not just sex) and avoiding pain, and the *artha* perspective focuses on doing what is profitable (in many senses, not just money) and avoiding loss. The antonym of *dharma* is *adharma* meaning unnatural or immoral.

With the changing times, the concept of *Dharma* is also changing, creating ample opportunity for Professional Social Work to intervene. For example, the theory of *dharma* elaborates that not only a person have to accept his place in the society but he have to be good at what you doing and be happy about it. What is the reward he will be getting for this? When he dies and reincarnates to the next life, he may get a better life. This theory is largely ignored by new generation. India is built on caste system and many see *Dharma* as just a technique created to prevent people from crossing the line of social statue or relationship. The concept of *Dharma* has been misused by many people in upper hierarchy to oppress the lower class. That's why Indian Govt. has brought several Social legislations i.e. The Scheduled Castes and Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, to protect the fundamental rights of people from lower strata.

3. Reincarnation

Reincarnation, or the cycle of birth and rebirth, is one of the core concepts in all the three major religious traditions in India. Hence, followers tend to view their present life as part of a long cycle of existence on earth with birth and death being markers separating each life from the next. Death is viewed as a passage to the next life. The soul (*Atman*) transmigrates from one life to the next and this journey terminates only when the soul has reached a certain level of spiritual progress. Then the soul attains salvation, which means the cycle of birth and rebirth has ended and the soul joins the Super soul (*Parmatma* or God). Hindus, Sikhs and Jains perceive the liberation of the soul as the ultimate goal (*Moksha*), and human life is seen as a precious opportunity to achieve spiritual upliftment .

4. Salvation (Moksha)

Salvation is the concept that, as part of divine providence, God saves people from biological death, by providing for them an eternal life or long-lasting afterlife. In Hinduism, Salvation {Moksha} is a process by which a person is realizing that he/she is indeed the Atman {the Immortal Soul within} and not the perishable material body. Hindu salvation is the process by which a person [individual soul] is merging with the Paramathman [or God]. In Hinduism Salvation is known as self-realization or {Moksha} (Viswanathan 2007) . Religions are mere paths and not the final goal. Salvation is a very natural process. It can be achieved in one life or the worst by many lives. The Hindu Salvation process, like Newton's laws of action is mathematical and predictable. Hindu salvation is based on the theory of reincarnation. According to Hindu scriptures, one can attain salvation by four methods i.e. i. Jnana Yoga – Path of knowledge, ii. Karma Yoga – Path of unattached, unmotivated actions and thoughts, iii. Bhakti Yoga – Path of total surrender of one's will to God and iv. Rajyoga – Path of breathing and Pranayama – eradication of evil thoughts.

According to the Buddhism, escaping from suffering in life is possible for the one who accepts and follows the four noble truths: 1) The nature of existence is suffering 2) Suffering is caused by desire, or thirst (*tanha*) to experience existence 3) The complete cessation of desire leads to the cessation of suffering and 4) In order to escape suffering and attain enlightenment, one has to follow the Noble Path, consisting of the eight practices of self-training classified in three categories: morality (*sila*), meditation (*amadhi*) and wisdom (*panna*).

The Muslim doctrine of salvation is that unbelievers (*kuffar*, literally “those who are ungrateful”) and sinners will be condemned, but genuine repentance results in Allah’s forgiveness and entrance into Paradise upon death. The Qur’an teaches the necessity of both faith and good works for salvation: He it is Who sends blessings on you, as do His angels, that He may bring you out from the depths of Darkness into Light: and He is Full of Mercy to the Believers.(33:43)

Religion and Social Work: Indian Context

Religions are the major source of ethics, morality and ideology for the society and for philanthropic work. Religion and spirituality is thought to one of the important motivation for altruistic behavior in any society. In Professional social work, the innate altruistic tendencies of Practitioners are heavily drawn from “Religions”, which in turn is shared with entire humankind.³ Hence, it is important that the studies of Religion and Spirituality should be an integral part of Social work education and intervention.

Social Work is a practice profession. While a value base is necessary for all profession, it is crucial for Social Work (Gutierrez 1988). The values and concepts of Social Work profession i.e. Compassion, recognizing the dignity and worth of an individual, welfare of needy, tolerance, self-control are clearly drawn from the various Religions of the world.

It is fact that, at the times when major Religions of the world were manifested, the concept and practice of Social Work was, as it's understood in modern times, did not exist. However, the Religious ideologies did set up many approaches and practices which clearly overlap with this "helping profession".

The significant contribution of Religion and Religious institution in development of Social Work Profession in India can be understood by the fact that, the major schools of Social Work are founded under the auspicious of Religious Institutions i.e. Christian Missionaries of American Marathi Mission particularly Dr. Manshardt established the first Social Work school in Asia – Tata Institute of Social Science (TISS) at Mumbai. Delhi School of Social Work was founded by the Young Women Christian Association. Centre of Studies in Rural development, Ahmadnagar was founded by the missionaries of American Marathi Mission. Similarly, Nirmala Niketan at Mumbai, Loyola college at Chennai and Trivandrum, Madras Christian College in Tamilnadu, Rajgiri College of Social Work in Kerala, Indore school of Social Work in Madhya Pradesh and Stella Maris College in Tamil Nadu are some of the prominent institutes of Social Work which have flourished under the umbrella of Religious institutions.

Spirituality and Social Work

The term "Spirituality" designates the human longing for a sense of meaning and fulfillment through morally responsible relationship between diverse individuals, families, communities, cultures and religions. Edwards. T. (1983) defines spirituality as, "the underlie dimension of consciousness that openly waits and searches for a transcendence fulfillment of our human nature (Saccoo 1996). Spirituality is experienced through unique and common forms that are expressed in societal myths, rituals and symbols. As such, spirituality includes and goes beyond institutional religious beliefs. Spirituality is often linked to

religion; however, some see it as a distinct concept (Carroll, 1998; Sanzenbach, Canda & Joseph, 1989).

Canda (1990) defines Spirituality it as “the person’s search for a sense of meaning and morally fulfilling relationships between oneself, other people, (and) the encompassing universe. Social work, as quoted by Strops is a process of “helping people to help themselves”. It is commonly understood that unless people discover the meaning and purpose of their life from within, they will not be able to help themselves in real sense. Discovery of “True self” is possible. This is a journey of experiencing fulfillment in life. This gives a sense of fearlessness of death which people may attain if they try to seek it. Thus, from the practical acquisition of spirituality is the attainment of tension free life. This technology being based on wisdom oriented restraint and contentment, uproots the desires and produces calmness, in the mind. It helps a person to find themselves. It assists a person in self-actualization.

Anupriyo Mallick, 2008, in his article “Spiritual Dimension in social work”, perceives that, without having a comprehensive world view, as its foundation, Social work cannot function as a holistic discipline and devise its varied roles and activities in to smooth symphony. There are so many religions in the world and man is necessarily born into one of them, that religion is no more than that the outer cell of spirituality. Spirituality germinates there and as it grows, it sets itself free from religious conditioning and limitations. Spirituality, in spite of expressional differences, carries the image of eternity and universality. That is how and why the spirituality descends on earth as age after age and disseminates the messages to mankind that impart momentum to its onward march toward divinity, the goal of self-realization. It is the dharma of social work to put man on his destined track. But it can take up this exhilarating assignment only if it is steeped in a spiritual orientation itself. To rescue human being from the snares of materiality and turn oneself towards spiritual destination is one of the most urgent tasks that social work can think of for

the present. The craze for super affluence, vulgar pleasure and beastly satisfaction is dehumanizing and de-spiritualizing. All problems individual or social lie at the roots. Unless we engage ourselves at the level of root causes, we cannot have access to abiding solutions. The human beings fundamental problem is one of a spiritual in nature. Various Social work practitioners recognize that religion and spirituality may play an important role in practice (Furman, Benson, Grimwood, & Canda, 2004; Kaut, 2002; Mattison, Jayaram, Croxton, 2000; Northcut, 2000; Sheridan, 2004, Sheridan, Bullis, Adcock, Berlin & Miller, 1992; Sherwood, Wolfer & Scales, 2002).

Ethics and Social Work

Ethics are moral philosophy, which addresses questions about morality (what is good, what is bad, concept of good and evil, right and wrong, virtue and vice, justice and crime, etc.) The Ethical responsibilities flow from all human relationships, from the personal and familial to the social and professional. Ethics is a requirement for human life. It is our means of deciding a course of action. Without it, our actions would be random and aimless. There would be no way to work towards a goal because there would be no way to pick between a limitless number of goals. Even with an ethical standard, we may be unable to pursue our goals with the possibility of success. To the degree which a rational ethical standard is taken, we are able to correctly organize our goals and actions to accomplish our most important values. Any flaw in our ethics will reduce our ability to be successful in our endeavors.

Social Work is a value based profession. In this, Social Workers ability to act ethically is an essential aspect of the quality of the service offered to clients. While Social Workers' effort to help their clients are almost motivated by good intentions, but the nature of problem and their potential solutions give rise to conflicts and contradictions that are not always easily resolved. For this reason, the Social Work code of ethics has come into

existence which guides Social Workers decision making process, when ethical issues arise. The first of such Code of Ethics was developed in 1976, and provided the basic for The Ethics of Social Work: Principles and Standards {International Federation of Social Workers, 1994}. This document had promoted ethical debate and reflection among organizations and providers in member countries. The goals included: formulating basic principles that could be adopted across cultures and settings, identifying ethical dilemmas in Social Work practice, and making recommendations for addressing them.

The 1994 document declared that “Social Work originates variously from humanitarian, religious and democratic ideals and philosophies and has universal application to meet human needs”. In 2004, this document was replaced by the current statement, Ethics in Social Work, Statement of Principles {International Federation of Social Workers and International Association of Schools of Social Work, 2004} that emerged from a joint conference with an International Association of Schools of Social Work {IASSW} held in Adelaide, Australia. The current statement retains the goals of the earlier document, while adding the acknowledgement that “some ethical challenges and problems facing Social Workers are specific to particular countries, other are common”. This acknowledgement highlights the need of contextual and cultural ethical awareness as a necessary part of the Professional practice of any Social Worker.

The Dilemma

An important component of Social Work practice is the assessment of clients’ needs. Social Work strives to “take the client from where they’re at” and utilize his or her strengths in order to improve the quality of life. We know that Social Work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments. Traditionally, while serving needy people, Social Work has incorporated interventions that are limited with the biological, psychological, sociological and economical aspects.

Due to the importance of Religion and Spirituality in the lives of people, it is important that Social Work practitioners, {particularly in India} develop the ability to incorporate clients' Religion and Spiritual beliefs into the process of giving assistance.

Any models of generalist practice that does not in-clude a conception of the Social Workers roles, responsibilities and resources relative to beneficiaries Religious and Spiritual interest's does not address the totality of the beneficiary's capacity. It will inevitably fail to help the beneficiary reach the full potential.

However a large number of Social Workers, regardless of their personal religious afflictions, are trained to think that the religion has no relevance for their everyday professional practice (Cnaan 2006). The rational being given that Social Work profession operates from psycho socioeconomic perspectives, with the purpose of enhancing the interactions between people and their environment. People should not be seen as only as bio/psycho or social beings, but also as beings with the existential and Spiritual dimension.

A number of Social Work authors (Canda 1988) have expressed that the human experience of Religion and spirituality has been somewhat neglected in Social Work education and practice. The Practitioners of Social Work are increasingly recognizing Religion and Spirituality as one of the important variables to enable the lives of the beneficiaries who have to cope with the deep problems. Integrating the Religious and Spiritual aspect of Social Work has been expanding in the interest of spirituality in Social Work but remain largely on the periphery of the professions educational enterprise and ministering practice. The practitioners of Social Work recognize that building on the religious and spiritual strengths of the client may enable the client to improve their coping skills and serve as a support (Gilbert, 2000; Kaut, 2002; Northcut, 2000; Ortiz & Langer, 2002; Rose, Westefeld, Ansley, 2001; Sermabeikian, 1994).

The Way Forward

In 2002, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) in Britain has published several books on the role of Spirituality and Religion in practice, along with the development of educational tools for instructors (Scales et al., 2002). Despite this recognition and attention of importance of Religion and Spirituality in Social work Education and Practice, there has been limited initiative by various universities in India to incorporate this component in Social work curriculum although valuable contributions of Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi cannot be underestimated.

Religion and Spirituality is one of the important variables to enable the lives of the beneficiaries who have to cope with the deep problems. In a country like India, where all aspects of human life is largely influenced by Religion and Spirituality, it become significant to understand the Religious ideologies of Social work Educator/Practitioners as well that of clients, so that Social work service delivery system become effective. Keeping all these valuable concerns in mind, the authors of this paper recommends following measures to bridge the gap between Religion, Spirituality and Social Work Ethics:

1. The Indian Universities offering Social Work education at Masters and Bachelors level should design and incorporate a separate paper on “Religion, Spirituality and Social Work. This paper should explain in detail the various Religious ideologies of the world with a particular focus on Indian originated Religions
2. The Indian Universities should organize special refresher courses on “Religion, Spirituality and Social Work” for Social work educators so that they can disseminate concrete information and knowledge to Trainee Social workers.
3. The field work training curriculum should include at least 15 days of block placement in various Religious Institutions like “Temples, Churches, Monasteries,

Mosques” so that Trainee Social Worker may observe and understand the Religious and Spiritual practices of various sects.

4. University Grants Commission should organize series of conferences, seminars on importance to “Religion Spirituality and Social Work”

Conclusion

The materialism promoted by science has failed to give the real meaning to the ultimate purpose of life. The number of suicides cases is on rise. The feeling of emptiness and hopelessness is growing among Indian people’s life. As a helping profession, Social Work should take a strategic step to incorporate Religion and Spirituality in Social Work education and practice so that we can “help people to help themselves in true sense”.

Notes

1. For details see Census of India, www.censusindia.net accessed on 14.11.2011.
2. See the concise and insightful article “Purpose of Life and Salvation in Islam” Religion Facts, <http://www.religionfacts.com/islam/beliefs/salvation.htm>, . Accessed Jan 2, 2011.
3. For example, Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), 2008: Origin and development of Social work in India, traces this.

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Spirituality as the Heart of All Development

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The ideal of development as a continuing process of growth, creation, improvement and positive change has yielded to a reality more frequently marked by destruction, division, deprivation and depletion. The difference between the cherished ideal and the cruel reality finds its roots in a poverty of values and spirituality. That poverty, hunger and other deprivations persist in an age of global plenty is not an issue of logistics, technology or financing so much as a question of values and morality. Setting a clear and defined course of action that we all agree on with regard to the development agenda is important but we must not forget that the world cannot be changed with world and plans alone : it can only change when our value, attitude and action change. The crisis of the non-implementation of action plans is itself a crisis of values.

1. From a Materialistic to Deeper Values

This is not decrying the important achievements that have been made in recent years in areas such as health, life expectancy and the reduction of poverty. Nevertheless, our world remains under the dark cloud of an excessively materialistic paradigm one of

the consequences of which is that development is too often a narrow concept largely understood only in economic terms. This narrow concept of development can find its roots in a narrow concept of the self that neglects the larger reality of heart and soul. Dims the inner light of the spirit and values and forget essential one-ness of the human family.

Lasting development within society will not happen without development of the individual. We need to move from an overly materialistic approach to one that includes the broader and deeper realities of human life and experience: the inner world of our thoughts and values and the innate spirituality on which our worth and dignity are based. We will not be able to get the outer world in order until we have first learned to get our inner world in order and transcend short-term selfishness, consumerism, disregard for others and a corruption of value. We will not see the changes we look for in the world around us – such as the elimination of poverty, violence and injustice- until we first bring about those changes in ourselves.

Spirituality provides us with the much-needed language of the heart. It is the heart that communicates with feelings that can transcend barriers and melt division. True identity of self builds self-respect leading to better understanding. Learning attitude and harmonious relations. Spirituality engenders the awareness of self-responsibility knowing that all problems can be solved with the right attitude.

Some of the practical ways to apply spirituality are: to focus on developing spiritual values in life, to treat others equally with a balance of love and right judgment; practice short times of silence throughout the day-it brings clarity to the mind and harmony to the emotions study inspiring spiritual texts. Keep good company and have positive attitude towards all.

Spirituality lends itself to a holistic perspective in which both spirit and matter, soul and body are real. Among its many rich fruits spirituality offers us a methodology to deepen our awareness of our inner being. From this awareness may follow steps to

develop or change the self in ways that are conducive to the kind of world society we want.

A spiritual understanding of the self indicates that human worth is not derived from matter and material possessions or measured in consuming, having and doing. We then see poverty not just as relating to a material state; in fact the near-bankruptcy of values such as honesty, love, respect, care and compassion is the greatest poverty afflicting the world today as well as itself causing material poverty. Values and spirituality then are at the heart not just of who we are but also of the political, social, economic and environmental issues we are facing. It is also they, rather than words and numbers that constitute the foundations of the world we are seeing to build.

Nature is not just a resource to be exploited, a potential source of economic growth, but a sustaining and sacred presence to be treated with respect and care. In a world of social disintegration and individual loss of meaning, spirituality offers us a sense of purpose and the ability to reconcile the tensions that challenge our being and living together as we strive for which is good, meaningful and positive.

Helping us to recognize the common identity we share with fellow members of the human family, spirituality's concept of power is one of sovereignty over the self rather than of controlling others. Distinguishable from religion, and possible doctrinal divergency, spirituality is concerned with the primary challenge of putting our inner house in order. It is not antithetical to material progress but believes that such progress yields a bitter fruit and carries within itself the seeds of its own demise if values such as responsibility, justice, honesty, sharing and respect are not its guiding polestar.

Our struggle for development cannot rely on technological revolution alone or be judged in economic terms without also taking account of fundamental human values and the spiritual dimensions of the individual. Human beings do not live by bread alone and development is to sustain people and life rather than

being an end in itself. It is also soon apparent that securing access to basic human needs itself depends on the presence of values and values that sustain people – such as respect, honesty and love – are also values that sustain development.

It is clear, therefore, that sustainable development, and development that sustains all people, depends at least as much on inner transformation and growth as on material progress and prosperity. We need to ask ourselves what are the values and principles that underlie our practices and that we would like to be the guiding force in our choices and decisions. Transcending notions of materialism and material gratification as being the essence of life, we may come to higher purpose of developing the inner self, inculcating moral values and expressing our skills and talents in service of others.

Action with regard to such personal and spiritual capacity-building is required within every sector and level of society as both formal education at school but also at home in the community and workplace. Such education, as a creative and transformational process, will touch the heart as well as the mind and give shape to good governance and policies on crucial areas such as the use of resources, healthcare, industrialization, economic activity and technology.

The Brahma Kumaries World Spiritual University therefore believes that achieving the goals of sustainable development requires that we place a high priority on learning and education that is not only functional, practical and relevant in content but which also has spiritual and moral principles and values at its heart and the overall development of the whole person and society as its aim. This is the truly indispensable basic foundation of education.

In the realm of social sciences, aspects of transcendence and actualization that qualify spirituality have been discerned through health research, ageing research, counseling and positive psychology.

2. Spirituality and Social Work

Four category of existing literature on spirituality and social work are the conceptual models of spirituality used in social work, association of core spirituality tenets with teleological ethics of the profession, aspects of spiritually inclined social work practice and micro and macro domains of intervention.

Conceptual Models of Spirituality used in Social Work

Carroll (2001) has described seven conceptual models of spirituality used in social work – the vertical horizontal approach, five levels of consciousness model, integrated approach, self-other-context-spiritual (SOCS) circle, holistic model of spirituality, the whole person model and the two-dimension holistic model. The underlying assumption herein is the spiritual self of the individual which needs to be addressed and all transactions being within the reference system of that self. All other aspects of existence converge into or diverge from that spiritual self.

In the vertical-horizontal approach, the vertical dimension has to do with relationship with **GOD** and the horizontal dimension has to do with relationship with self, others and environment. Within the five levels of consciousness or existence – physical, emotional, mental, existential and spiritual. All the previous levels need to be geared up to the highest and actualized level of existence which is spiritual

The self-other-context-spiritual (SOCS) circle contains a presentation of four life realities - Self, other, context and spiritual. Within the largely interactionist mode, there is a true cognition whence the spiritual is taken cognizance of and that eventually leads to desirable harmony. The holistic model of spirituality considers spirituality as the centre of person surrounded by psychological, spiritual, biological and sociological aspects of the individual. The outer circle is then synergetically the wholeness of the spirituality of the person in relation with all domains of existence.

In the whole person model, the traditional clinical dimension, integrative dimension and the spiritual dimension are involved. The spiritual dimension at the top includes affective, behavioural and cognitive aspects; the traditional clinical dimension at the bottom level includes physical, emotional, and social dimension and the in between space, the integrative dimension provides the space through which the traditional dimension interacts with the spiritual dimension. This linking of virtual spaces and dimensions then leads to well-being of the individual. The two-dimension holistic model proposes the transpersonal dimension and the bio-psycho-social dimensions. Both these dimensions chart out into infinity, hence indicating the infiniteness of the spiritual context and the total space between the two dimensions is wherein the growth occurs.

Core Spirituality Tenets and the technological Ethics of the Profession

The core spirituality tenets of inherent equity and transcendence find associations with ethics of social work.

Aspects of Spiritually Inclined Social Work Practice

The aspects of spiritually inclined social work practice include the components of spiritual assessment, spiritually inclined interventions and phases of spiritual development and sustenance.

3. Micro and Macro Domains of Interventions

In the domain the core is the self and the concept of being and existence, issues affecting which are disharmony, dependency and suffering, which affects the sense of well-being. The source may be located within the self and significant other. Through spiritual ontologies and epistemologies, the endeavour is to traverse the vital and psychic domains of the self towards the transpersonal domain. In this domain, the spiritual metaphors, constructs and experiences are unearthed, which then lead to transpersonal development and elevated concepts of selfhood.

In the macro domains of intervention, the core is cosmic consciousness deriving from notions of theistic existentialism. Issues of imbalance of the cosmic order and disharmony are primary, sources of which may be colonization of the lifeworld and distortion of worldviews. Through spirituality catalogues, the effort is to re-instate harmonized worldviews, transcend to larger macro-cosmic domains with metaphors of equality, transcendence and reverence for life, The eventual outcome is cosmic transcendence and synergies of being and becoming.

Diagram 1: Micro Domains of Intervention

Self and Being-consciousness	Vital, Mental, Emotional and Physical Domains	Transcending to Transpersonal Domains
Existence and Well-Being	Spiritual Ontologies and Epistemologies	Spiritual Metaphor, Constructs and Experiences Unearthed
Issues of Disharmony, Dependency, Suffering	Sources within self and significant other	Transpersonal Development-Supramental Realisation and elevated conceptions of selfhood

Diagram 2: Macro Domains of Interventions

Cosmic Consciousness	Re-instating Harmonised Worldviews	Transcending to Macrocosmic Domains
Theistic Existentialism	Spiritual Ontologies, Epistemologies and Cosmologies	Equality, Transcendence and Reverence for Life Metaphors
Issues of Imbalance of the Cosmic Order, Disharmony	Source-Colonisation of the Lifeworld and Distortion of Worldviews	Cosmic Transcendence and Synergies of being and Becoming

4. Spirituality in Social Service

The former President of India, Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, launched the people's Foundation for Development of Enlightened Citizenship, a body of meant to motivate people – particularly those spiritually inclined – to take up social causes.

The President recalled some of his experiences during his travels through the country. He recounted that on a visit to the Jal Mandir in Bihar, he happened to see lotus flowers blooming in a lake. The sight reminded him of a couplet written by Tamil poet Tiruvalluvar 2000 years ago, which gives the axiom of life.

The couplet says that whatever the dept or the state of cleanliness of the pond, the lotus flower springs out and blooms majestically looking towards the sun. Similarly, human life can be transformed into a purposeful high only when a great aim engulfs the mind of the individual.

The President recalled several pleasant and spiritual experiences on visits to holy places of various faiths in different parts of the country. In all these places, he said, he found that great souls had propagated the philosophy of a good life and, above all, these centres with a multi-religious environment provided a harmonious ambience motivating people to live in peace and happiness.

The Message, the President said, that he got from his experiences at all these holy places was that when people visit a shrine, their minds are focused on GOD, either to thank Him for all that He has given, or to plead for divine assistance. Such minds are conditioned to serve GOD in whatever way possible. Such an elevated state of mind, the President proposed, should be channelized for the good of the society and nation. He said at least five million Indians on an average visit major places of worship daily. Most of these devout pray for their happiness and prosperity. Along with their prayers, the President suggests, these devotees could take one of the following vows, which could be displayed at these places of worship:

1. I will be responsible for educating at least five students for three years.
2. I will activate at least one pond in my neighbourhood or nearest village.
3. On return from this place of worship I will remove all enmity within my family and withdraw any court cases.
4. On return from this place of worship I will plant five fruit-bearing trees.
5. I will not gamble and succumb to any addiction.
6. I will treat male and female children in my family equally in educating them.

7. I will lead from now onwards a righteous life free from corruption.
8. I will not abuse bad words and make my tongue dirty.
9. I will help the persons when they are in need.

Even if ten percent of the devotees take any one of these vows, the President said, it would bring peace and enrich social life. Righteousness, Mr. Kalam explained, is what makes a human being into a perfect citizen. That is why, he said, people who wish to have moral harmony in the world, in their nation and society, should first cultivate their personal lives by inculcating righteousness and a sincere will. This is the foundation of a happy, prosperous life for all, from the emperor down to the common man.

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Buddhism The Pioneer of Social Work Practices

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Buddhism is an ancient Indian religion that is practiced in many parts of the world including countries like Japan, China, Burma, Thailand, South Korea, Vietnam, Mongolia, Srilanka. Unfortunately it almost vanished from the country of its origin after prevailing there for about 1500 years. Dr B R Ambedkar staged its revival in 1956 when he embraced Buddhism along with millions of his followers. Buddhism was founded by Gautam Buddha (563 BCE-483 BCE). In his period, the birth based Varna System (Chaturvarna system) was prevalent which was highly discriminatory against the Shudras, (ranked lowest under the Varna System) and the women. Inequality, injustice and discrimination were the hallmark of the Varna system. Buddha relentlessly attacked the Varna system and sought to establish an equalitarian society based on the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity, through his Dhamma. Buddha's philosophy appealed to the masses and this led to the emergence of Buddhism as the religion of the majority. Buddhism was spread to whole of Indian subcontinent and even to Afghanistan and Iran. The great Mauryan emperors, especially Ashoka, played pivotal role in the expansion of Buddhism. Ashoka, during his reign, sent missionaries to Srilanka, Egypt, Greece. India, it is claimed, was Buddhist for around 1500 years, which is said to be the golden period of India.

Sangha, the order of the Buddhist monks (Bhikhus/Bhikhunis) was a well organized unit. The Bhikhus/Bhikhunis reached out to

the masses to serve them. They rendered exemplary social services to the people with great dedication and commitment. They were the earliest social workers who pioneered the social work practices. Unfortunately their contribution to the humanity hasn't been acknowledged.

1. Buddhism and the Goal of Social Work

The primary goal of professional social work is to promote human well being with special attention to the marginalized, oppressed and those living below poverty line. Thus the social work emphasizes on the human well being as well as the well being of the society in general.

This goal of the professional social work is echoed in the Buddha's philosophy. The centre of his Dhamma is man and the relation of man to man in his life on earth. This was his first postulate. His second postulate was that men are living in sorrow, in misery and poverty. The world is full of suffering and that how to remove this suffering from the world is the only purpose of Dhamma, nothing else is Dhamma. The recognition of the existence of suffering and to show the way to remove suffering is the foundation and basis of his Dhamma.

2. Liberty, Equality, Fraternity and Buddhism

Although the motto "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" first appeared during the French Revolution, it was added to the French Constitution in 1958. However the ideals of Liberty, equality and fraternity were part of Buddha's philosophy long before the French revolution. Dr B R Ambedkar has observed that his philosophy too was "enshrined" in these three words. However he adds, "Let no one however say that I have borrowed my philosophy from the French Revolution. I have not. I have derived them from the teachings of my master, the Buddha. I found that his teaching was democratic to the core". Dr Ambedkar further argues that for Buddhists the Dhamma is that "universal morality which protects the weak from the strong, which provides common models,

standards, and rules, and which safeguards the growth of the individual. It is what makes liberty and equality effective....” According to Dr Ambedkar, fraternity ‘is nothing but another name for brotherhood of men which is another name for morality. This is why the Buddha preached that Dhamma is morality.’

Buddhism laid great stress on equality, the admission to Sangha was open to all irrespective of caste, varna, social status and gender. Inside the Sangh all were equal and the rank was regulated by worth and not by birth. In this regard Buddha once said, “The Sangh was like the ocean and the Bhikkhus were like the rivers that fell into the ocean. The river has its separate name and separate existence. But once the river entered the ocean it lost its separate name and separate existence. It becomes one with the rest. Same is the case with the Sangh. When a Bhikkhu entered the Sangh he became one with the rest like the water of the ocean. He lost his caste. He lost his status”

3. Buddhism in the Context of Social Work Core Values

The professional social work has certain core values of service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence, on which are based the ethical principles of social work. These principles are the expression of the ideals to which all social workers should aspire. These ideals are reflected in the philosophy of Buddhism and the activities of Buddhist Sangha.

The Value of Service

Ethical Principle: Social workers’ primary goal is to help people in need and to address social problems. The social workers invoke their knowledge, values, and skills to address social issues and help those in need without significant financial returns.

The Buddhist Sangha was a well organized order of the Buddhist monks. Unlike the ascetics who are dissociated from

the society, the Buddhist monks were intimately connected with the masses and rendered valuable services to the people in return for nothing. In addition to preaching the Dhamma, the Buddhist monks provided individual counseling, family counseling, group counseling on matters relating to daily lives. They were instrumental in conflict resolution between /individuals/groups/ states and establishment of a peace loving society. They provided support to the oppressed and the marginalized that included the shudras, women and other lower castes. The monks also provided the much needed health care to the needy people. Many monks were trained in medicine at the Buddhist universities of Taxila and Nalanda which had courses in medicine. Jivaka, the famous physician, looked after the healthcare of Buddha and his Sangha. He was very keen to join Sangha, but Buddha asked him not to join Sangha and instead use his expertise in medicine for serving the masses.

The Value of Social Justice

Ethical Principle: Social workers challenge social injustice.

Buddha vehemently attacked the then prevalent birth based Varna system/caste system through his sermons and discourses. Under the varna system the society was divided into four classes namely Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and the Shudras. There was graded inequality, Brahmins were placed at the top ; the Kshatriyas were placed below the Brahmins but above the Vaishyas; the Vaishyas were placed below the Kshatriyas but above the Shudras and the Shudras were placed the lowest of all. It was also necessary that each class must follow the occupation assigned to it. The Brahmins' occupation was to learn, teach and officiate at religious ceremonies. The Kshatriyas' occupation was to bear arms and to fight. The occupation of the Vaishyas was trade and business. The Shudras' occupation was to do menial service for all the three superior classes. Transgression from one class to the other was not possible. Thus social disabilities were heaped upon the Shudras, the lowest ranked as well as women. While the upper

three Varnas namely the Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas enjoyed all the privileges, the Shudras and the women suffered a lot and faced discrimination and deprivation in every aspect of life. Buddha and his Sangha challenged this unjust social institution and championed the cause of the Shudras and women. Buddha was of the view that for Dhamma to be Saddhamma, it must pull down all social barriers between man and man. There is no argument in favour of caste and inequality which he did not refute. The argument between Buddha and a Brahmin named Assalayana in Assalayana-Sutta on the issue of superiority of Brahmins is very enlightening. Assalayana went to the Buddha and placed before him the case in favour of the superiority of the Brahmins and the Varna system. He said, “ Brahmins maintain, Gotama, that only Brahmins form the superior class, all other classes being inferior ; that only Brahmins form the white class, all other classes being black fellows ; that purity resides in Brahmins alone and not in non-Brahmins; and that only Brahmins are Brahma’s legitimate sons, born from his mouth, offspring of his, creations of his, and his heirs. What does Gotama say hereon?”

The Buddha’s answer simply pulverized Assalayana. The Buddha said : “Assalayana, are not the Brahmin wives of Brahmins known to have their periods, and to conceive, and to lie and give birth? Notwithstanding this do Brahmins really maintain all what you have said though they are themselves born of women like everybody else?” Assalayana gave no answer. The Buddha went further and asked Assalayana another question. “ Suppose, Assalayana, a young noble consorts with a Brahmin maiden, what would be the issue? Will it be an animal or human being? “ Again Assalayana gave no answer. “As to the possibility of moral development, is it only a Brahmin and not a man of the other three classes, who in this country, can develop in his heart the love that knows no hate or illwill?” No. All four classes can do it,” replied Assalayana. “Assalayana ! Have you ever heard,” asked the Buddha, “ that in the Yona and Kamboja countries and in other adjacent countries, there are only two classes, namely, masters and slaves, and that a master can become a slave and *vice*

versa? “ Yes, I have heard so,” replied Assalayana. “If your Chaturvarna is an ideal society, why is it not universal?”

On none of these points was Assalayana able to defend his theory of caste and inequality. He was completely silenced. He ended by becoming a disciple of the Buddha.

Buddha’s discourses led to the awakening among the shudras, women and weakening of the Varna/Caste system to a great extent. The shudras, women and other downtrodden castes were admitted to the Sangha. This step went a long way in ensuring justice to the aforesaid marginalized sections in that period. This made Buddhism popular among the Shudras, women and other lower castes who were in majority and Buddhism spread to all the nooks and corners of the Indian subcontinent and beyond. Buddhism was thus successful in overthrowing an unjust social order and its replacement with an equalitarian society. Thus Buddhism successfully challenged the social injustice and helped in the empowerment of the downtrodden sections of the society.

The Value of Dignity and Worth of the Person

Ethical Principle: Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of each person. Social workers are supposed to treat every individual in a caring and respectful manner, considering the individual differences and cultural/ ethnic diversity.

Buddhism challenged the then prevalent social order and sought justice for the down trodden. The Buddhism recognized the worth and dignity of the Shudras and women, challenged the unjust social order that facilitated hegemony of the select few and brought the marginalized sections in the mainstream. Even while Buddhism attacked the Varna system, it did not allow the persecution of the upper three Varnas when Buddhism prevailed in the whole of Indian subcontinent and beyond. It is noteworthy that a large number of Brahmins and other upper Varna people joined the Buddhist Sangha. Buddha successfully reformed gangs of robbers

including the notorious robber Angulimala and inducted them into his Sangha.

The Value of Human Relationships

Ethical Principle: Social workers recognize the central importance of human relationships. Social workers aim to strengthen relationships among people in a purposeful effort to promote, restore, maintain, and enhance the well-being of individuals, families, social groups, organizations, and communities.

Buddhism revolved round the human well-being and relationships among people were given utmost importance. In fact liberty, equality and fraternity are the core principles of Dhamma. According to Buddha, for Dhamma to be Saddhamma it must pull down all social barriers such as caste, varna, class and gender. The tireless work by the Sangha resulted in establishing a just and peace loving society based on the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity. Buddha stressed on love and respect not only for human beings but for all living beings. He said Dhamma is Saddhamma only when it teaches that more than 'Karuna' what is Necessary is 'Maitri'. Karuna is love for human beings. Buddha went beyond and taught Maitri. Maitri is love for all living beings'. The Buddha wanted man not to stop with Karuna but to go beyond mankind and cultivate the spirit of Maitri for all living beings.

This is reflected in one of Buddha's sermons to the Bhikkus; "Just as the earth does not feel hurt and does not resent, just as the air does not lend to any action against it, just as the Ganges water goes on flowing without being disturbed by the fire so also you Bhikkus must bear all insults and injustices inflicted on you and continue to bear Maitri towards your offenders. So almsmen, Maitri must flow and flow for ever. Let it be your sacred obligation to keep your mind as firm as the earth, as clean as the air and as deep as the Ganges. If you do so your Maitri will not be easily disturbed, by an act however unpleasant. For all who do injury will soon be tired out. Let the ambit of your Maitri be as boundless

as the world and let your thought be vast and beyond measure in which no hatred is thought of.”

The Value of Integrity

Ethical Principle: Social workers behave in a trustworthy manner.

The Social workers are expected to act honestly, responsibly and promote ethical practices on the part of the organizations with which they are affiliated.

The Buddhist Sangha was a very well organized and disciplined unit. Buddha himself had framed about seventy five conduct rules (*Sekhiya Dhamma*) for the Bhikkus and it was compulsory for the Bhikkhus to follow these conduct rules. Buddhist monks were supposed to behave well and be model persons in their mode and manner of behaviour. The Bhikkhus were accountable to the Sangha. Even general public could complain against Bhikkhus to the Sangha in case of misconduct on part of Bhikkhus. The conduct rules were strictly enforced. They were legal in substance involving a definite charge, trial and punishment. No Bhikkhu could be punished without a trial by a regularly constituted Court. The Court was to be constituted by the Bhikkhus resident at the place where an offence had taken place. The following punishments could be awarded against a guilty Bhikkhu: (i) Tarjaniya Karma (warn and discharge). (ii) Niyasha Karma (declaring insane). (iii) Pravrajniya Karma (expulsion from the Sangh). (iv) Utskhepniya Karma (boycott). (v) Parivasa Karma (expulsion from Vihar). Thus the Bhikkhus were men of high integrity who were bound by the conduct rules. Since the Bhikkhus were the messengers of Dhamma, Buddha wanted them behave responsibly and in the manner prescribed by the Sangha. It was for these reasons that the masses respected and trusted them.

The Value of Competence

Ethical Principle: Social workers practice within their areas of competence and enhance their professional expertise. Social workers should aspire to contribute to the knowledge base of the profession.

Bhikkhus being the messengers of Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, certain rules were laid down so that only those who are fit and deemed competent by the Sangha could become the Bhikkhus. For a person to become a Bhikkhu, he /she had to pass through two stages. The first stage was called Parivrajaka and the second stage was called Upasampada. It was only after the Upasampada that he/she could become a Bhikkhu/Bhikkhuni. A person aspiring to be a Bhikkhu had to first find a Bhikkhu who could act as an Upadhyaya. Only those Bhikkhus who had completed ten years tenure as Bhikkhus were eligible to be Uppadhyayas. Such a candidate if accepted by the Upadhyaya was called a Parivrajaka and had to remain in the service and tutelage of the Uppadhyaya. After the period of tutelage ends it is his Uppadhyaya who proposed the name of his student to a meeting of the Sangha specially called for the purpose for Upasampada and the student must request the Sangha for Upasampada. The Sangha must be satisfied that he /she is a fit and a proper person to be made a Bhikkhu/Bhikkhuni. For this purpose there was a set of questions which the candidate had to answer. It was only when the Sangha was satisfied the permission for Upasampada was granted and the person could become a Bhikkhu/Bhikkhuni.

Thus the Sangha had laid down a procedure by which only the dedicated, competent and enlightened persons could become Bhikkhus/Bhikkhunis and then serve the people and spread the message of Dhamma.

4. Bhikkhus: The Earliest Social Workers

Dr Ambedkar, the great scholar of Buddhism, in his work *Buddha and his Dhamma* has made the following observation

with regard to the function of the Bhikhus: “There is also another question that requires an answer. What is the function of the Bhikkhu? Is the Bhikkhu to devote himself to self-culture or is he to serve the people and guide them?”

He must discharge both the functions. Without self-culture he is not fit to guide. Therefore he must himself be a perfect, best man, righteous man and an enlightened man. For this he must practice self-culture. A Bhikkhu leaves his home. But he does not retire from the world. He leaves home so that he may have the freedom and the opportunity to serve those who are attached to their homes but whose life is full of sorrow, misery and unhappiness and who cannot help themselves.’

The Bhikhus and the Bhikhunis were highly disciplined and dedicated messengers of Buddha’s philosophy, their commitment to the welfare of the masses was beyond any question. In addition to preaching Buddha’s Dhamma, they challenged the unjust social practices such as birth based varna /caste system, discrimination against women and the shudras, exploitation of the masses by the priestly class, animal sacrifice and related rituals. They worked hard for the emancipation of the oppressed especially the shudras and women and strived for an equalitarian society based on the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity. Many monks were trained in medicine and they provided healthcare and support to the needy. The role of the Bhikhus in conflict resolution is commendable. Armed with effective communication skills and counseling acumen the Buddhist Sangha played pivotal role in conflict resolution and helped in the establishment of peace loving society. The Bhikhus/Bhikhunis always remained connected with the masses and rendered valuable guidance /counseling to the society. Emperor Ashoka, the great Buddhist emperor is also credited with the social services he rendered to the masses. He is said to have built hospitals, not only for human beings but also for the animals, shelter houses for the homeless. The 84000 thousand Stupas/ Ashokan pillars that he built carry the message

of universal brotherhood and peace. He fully supported the social welfare measures undertaken by the Buddhist Sangha.

Conclusion

Social work education is a modern concept and has been imported from the western countries. However the social work practices were pioneered in India about 2500 years ago by the Buddhist Sangha. The services rendered by the Bhikhu Sangha, with utmost dedication and commitment to the masses has hardly any parallels in the world history. The social work practices by the Bhikhu Sangha has its roots in Buddha's philosophy which centered around the wellbeing of humanity in accordance with the ethos of liberty, equality and fraternity. Unfortunately this great contribution of Buddhism to the mankind remains to be acknowledged.

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The Buddhism in the Contemporary Context of Religion, Morality and Law

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From time to time men find themselves forced to reconsider current and inherited beliefs and ideas, to gain some harmony between present and past experience, and to reach a position which shall satisfy the demands of feeling and reflection and give confidence for facing the future. If, at the present day, religion, as a subject of critical or scientific inquiry, of both practical and theoretical significance has attracted increasing attention, this can be ascribed to:

1. The rapid progress of scientific knowledge and thought;
2. The deeper intellectual interest in the subject;
3. The widespread tendencies in all parts of the world to reform or reconstruct religion, or even to replace it by some body of thought, more , rational and 'scientific' or less 'superstitious' and
4. The effect of social, political, and international events of a sort which, in the past, have both influenced and been influenced by religion.

Whenever the ethical or moral value of activities or conditions is questioned, the value of religion is involved and all deep-stirring experiences invariably compel a reconsideration of the most fundamental ideas, whether they are explicitly religious or not.¹ Ultimately there arise problems particularly of justice, human destiny and generally God, the universe and so on; and these in turn involve problems of the relation between 'religious' and other ideas, the validity of ordinary knowledge, and practicable conceptions of 'experience' and 'reality'.

This is more relevant in today's changed circumstances throughout the world, where so called theologians **firstly** try to establish the relation between religion and today's scientific development, morality and law and **secondly** avoid giving answer to the social, economic and political problems of the society. There is rather a view not only among the theologians but among law fraternity that these problems cannot solve by religion or by morality. Hence, in the present research paper my attempt is to bring into focus the true religion which can establish the proper relation between morality and law and gives scientific base to religion itself. In this article I have tried to establish that the Buddhist way of life is the suitable to make interlink between religion, morality and law at one hand and to provide the solution to the present social, economic and political problems in the various forms which are faced by the today's world on the other.

Before exploring the connection of religion, morality and law in the contemporary context I would like to point out the views of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, he said there is always one question raised against Buddha.² What are the teachings of the Buddha? This is a question on which no two followers of the Buddha or the students of Buddhism agree. To some Samadhi is his principal teaching. To some it is **Vipassana** (a kind of Pranayam). To some Buddhism is esoteric. To others it is exoteric. To some it is a system of barren metaphysics. To some it is sheer mysticism. To some it is a selfish abstraction from the world. To some it is a systematic repression

of every impulse and emotion of the heart. Many other views regarding Buddhism could be collected.

This divergence of views is astonishing. Some of these views are those of men who have a fancy for certain things. Such are those who regard that the essence of Buddhism lies in Samadhi or Vipassana, or Esoterism. The other views are the results of the fact that the majority of the writers on Buddhism are students of ancient Indian history. Their study of Buddhism is incidental and occasional. Moreover, some of them are not students of Buddhism. They are not even students of anthropology, the subject matter which deals with the origin and growth of religion. Therefore, the important question arises did the Buddha have no Social Message? When pressed for an answer, students of Buddhism refer to the two points. They say the Buddha taught Ahimsa. The Buddha taught peace! But I would like to ask did the Buddha give any other Social Message? Did the Buddha teach justice? Did the Buddha teach love? Did the Buddha teach liberty? Did the Buddha teach equality? Did the Buddha teach fraternity? Could the Buddha answer Karl Marx? These questions are hardly ever raised in discussing the Buddha's Dhamma. My answer is that the Buddha has a Social Message. He answers all these questions. But they have been buried by modern authors. Hence, in the context of this view of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar I would like to say that we should find the answer in the teachings of Buddha to the contemporary problems which are faced by today's world.³

1. What is Religion?

The word "religion" is an indefinite word with no fixed meaning. It is one word with many meanings. This is because religion has passed through many stages. The concept at each stage is called Religion though the concept at one stage has not had the same meaning which it had at the preceding stage or is likely to have at the succeeding stage⁴.

Thus the conception of religion was never fixed. It has varied from time to time. It is developed in three stages as given below -

- a) In first stage Magic was the religion. Because most of the phenomena such as lightning, rain and floods, the occurrence of which the primitive man could not explain, any weird performance done to control the phenomenon was called **magic**. Religion therefore came to be identified with magic.
- b) In second stage beliefs, rites, ceremonies and sacrifices were treated as religion. The pivotal point in religion starts with the belief that there exists some power which causes those phenomena which primitive man did not know and could not understand. Magic lost its place at this stage. This power was originally malevolent. But later it was felt that it could also be benevolent. Beliefs, rites, ceremonies and sacrifices were necessary both to propitiate a benevolent power and also to conciliate an angry power. Later that power was called God or the Creator.
- c) Then came the third stage that it is this God who created this world and also man. This was followed by the belief that man has a soul and the soul is eternal and is answerable to God for man's actions in the world.

This is in short, the evolution of the concept of Religion.⁵ This is what Religion has come to be and this is what it connotes-belief in God, belief in soul, worship of God, curing of the erring soul, propitiating God by prayers, ceremonies, sacrifices and so on.

2. Draw-backs in Traditional Concept Of Religion

The today's reality is that the idea of religion in the world based upon analogies to what the European theologians called Religion. Therefore, some European theologians refuse to recognize other religions as Religion if they are not as per their

expectations of religion. Instead of entering into those controversies it is better to proceed to give an idea

about modern problems in religion and show how it differs to suppress the today's social problems.

As most Indian theologians are following the views of European theologians, so I would like to highlight the view of European theologians regarding the concept of religion.

Religion, it is said, is personal and one must keep it to oneself. One must not let it play its part in public life, which means it governs relations between man and God in all spheres of life. It is evident that man is alone in this universe hence he need religion for his salvation. It is fundamentally and essentially so. In other words, human beings cannot do without religion.

The purpose of Religion is to find answer of the following questions:

- (i) Is the world not eternal?
- (ii) Is the world finite?
- (iii) Is the world infinite?
- (iv) Is the soul the same as the body?
- (v) Is the soul one thing and the body another?
- (vi) Does one who has gained the truth live again after death?
- (vii) Does one not live again after death?
- (viii) Does one both live again and not live again, after death?
- (ix) Does he neither live again, nor not live again, after death?

In short the Religion is concerned with revealing the beginning of things and nothing else.

These are the two basic aspects of religion which are followed in European countries and in India also, which are totally contradictory with today's modern social life. They are contradictory because **firstly** the view that 'religion, it is said, is personal and one must keep it to oneself is not acceptable because today we are living in the modern civilized society, which means there are relations between man and man in all spheres of life and it is part of public life of everybody. In short when there are two men living in relation to each other they must be governed by certain law whether they like it or not. Neither can escape it. In other words, today society cannot do without law governing relation between man and man. **Secondly** the view that 'religion is concerned with revealing the beginning of things' has become contradictory with today's modern society because today's questions are class struggle, injustice, inequality, exploitation, corruption and so on. The above two views cannot give answer to the recent movement started at national and international level **viz.** - Occupy Wall Street, Corporate corrupt practices like inter trading, Exploitation, Violation of basic Human Rights, Right to Development and so on. In short today's question is the sufferings of human beings and neither the observance of rites and ceremonies or beginning of things.

3. Religion and Morality

After knowing these two problems of religion one may raise the question - Does religion not teach us morality? Therefore, it has become necessary to see the relationship between religion and morality. In this regard I would like to raise one question what is the place of morality in Religion? The answer is negative and mind blowing because as a matter of truth morality has no place in Religion. Because in narrower sense the content of religion consists of God, soul, prayers, worship, rituals, ceremonies and sacrifices. And in wider sense it binds together people of similar ideology. These both senses meant for either protection of interest of people of same religion or achieve so called salvation of own

people and nothing else. So today's society has been facing the problems as mentioned above

Therefore, I am of the view that morality comes in only wherein one comes in relation with another, whereas morality comes in into religion as a side wind to maintain peace and order. Because religion is a triangular piece, be good to your neighbour because you are both children of God. That is the argument of religion, which is not acceptable at all today. It is pertinent to note that every religion preaches morality but morality is not the root of religion. It is a wagon attached to the religion. Since ancient time it is attached and detached by so called religion as the occasion requires. The action of morality in the functioning of religion is casual and occasional. Morality in religion is therefore not provides effective base for its existence. Therefore, today there is question regarding making morality as a basis of religion, but it sad to say that it not possible to made morality as a basis of religion because of two reasons -

1. It is hard for mankind to liberate itself from the entanglement of God and soul. It is hard for mankind to give up belief in **rites and ceremonies**. It is hard for mankind to give up its belief in Karma.
2. Mankind not ready to accept the relevance of morality with the social, economic and political aspects. Generally mankind is happy to observe the morality casually and occasionally in their day to day life. For this always justification is given that mankind is intent on its selfishness and takes delight and pleasure in it. So it is hard for mankind to accept morality as a base of religion by overriding selfishness. Therefore, I dare to say that even though mankind is religious but not right one, hence we are facing the problems of as mentioned above.

4. Morality and Law

In the above context obviously the next question will be raised what is the place of morality in law? The simple answer is Morality is law and law is Morality. In other words, in law morality takes the place of God although there is no God in law. In law there is no place for prayers, pilgrimages, rituals, ceremonies or sacrifices. Morality is the essence of law. Without it there is no law. Morality in law arises from the direct necessity for man to love man. It does not require the sanction of God. It is not to please God that man has to be moral. It is for his own good that man has to love man.

Instead of going into theories of law I would like to say that law must be based on such religion which not only recognizes the morality but it must be sacred and Universal also. In this regard the question may be raised that when is a thing sacred? Why is a thing sacred? In every human society, primitive or advanced, there are some things or beliefs which it regards as sacred and the rest as profane. When a thing or belief has reached the stage of being sacred (pavitra) it means that **it cannot be violated**. Indeed it cannot be touched. It is taboo. Contrary to this, a thing or a belief which is profane (apavitra), i.e., outside the field of the sacred, **may be violated**. It means one can act contrary to it, without feeling any fear or qualms of conscience. The sacred is something holy. To transgress it is a sacrilege.

The next question will be why is a thing made sacred? To confine the scope of the question to the matter in hand, why morality should have been made sacred? Three factors seem to have played their part in making morality sacred¹ and got status of law.

1. The social need for protecting the best. The background of this question lies imbedded in what is called the struggle of existence and the survival of the fittest. This arises out of the **Theory of Evolution**. It is common knowledge that evolution takes place through a struggle for existence because the means of

food supply in early times were so limited. The struggle is bitter. Nature is said to be red in claw and tooth. In this struggle which is bitter and bloody only the fittest survive. Such is the original state of society. In the course of ancient past someone must have raised the question, is the fittest (the strongest) the best? Would not the weakest if protected be ultimately the best for advancing the ends and aims of society? The then prevailing state of society seems to have given an answer in the affirmative. Then comes the question what is the way to protect the weak? Nothing less than to impose some restraints upon the fittest. In this lies the origin and necessity for morality. This morality had to be sacred because it was imposed originally on the fittest, i.e., the strongest. This has very serious consequences. Does morality in becoming social become anti-social? Is it not that there is no morality among thieves? There is morality among businessmen to observe corrupt practice⁶. There is morality among fellow castemen and there is also morality among a gang of robbers⁷. But this morality is marked by isolation and exclusiveness. It is a morality to protect "group interest." It is therefore anti-social. It is the isolation and exclusiveness of this kind of morality which throws its anti-social spirit in relief. The same is true where a group observes morality whether in the name of religion or not because it has interests of its own to protect. This consequently results into:

1. Society becomes group organization of society.
2. If society continues to consist of anti-social groups, society will remain a disorganized and a factional society. The danger of a disorganized and factional state of society is that it sets up a number of different models and standards.
3. In the absence of common models and common standards society cannot be a harmonious whole.
4. With such different models and standards it is impossible for the individual to attain consistency of mind.

5. A society which rests upon the supremacy of one group over another irrespective of its rational or proportionate claims inevitably leads to conflict.

Therefore, only way to put a stop to conflict is to have common rules of morality which are sacred to all.

Safeguard the growth of the individual. Under the struggle for existence or under group rule the interests of the individuals are not safe. The group set-up prevents an individual from acquiring consistency of mind which is possible only when society has common ideals, common models. His thoughts are led astray and this creates a mind whose seeing unity is forced and distorted.

2. The group set-up leads to discrimination and denial of justice. The group set-up leads to stratification of classes. Those who are masters remain masters and those who are born in slavery remain slaves. Owners remain owners and workers remain workers. The privileged remain privileged and the serfs remain serfs. This means that there can be liberty for some but not for all. This means that there can be equality for a few but none for the majority. What is the remedy? The only remedy lies in making fraternity universally effective. What is fraternity? It is nothing but another name for brotherhood of men which is another name for morality. This is why the law is morality and as law is sacred so is morality.

5. Role of Law

In the above context any one can raise the question as traditional religion is failed and morality having no place in religion then by what today's society should be governed?

There are three alternatives to be chosen by today's society -

1. Society may choose not to have any law, as an instrument of Government. For law is nothing if it is not an instrument of Government. This means society chooses the road to anarchy.
2. Society may choose the Police State, i.e., dictatorship as an instrument of Government.

3. Society may choose Welfare State in which law enforced by the Magistrate wherever people fail to observe the law.

It is unbeatable reality that in anarchy and dictatorship liberty always lost. Only in the third choice liberty survives. Those who want liberty must therefore have accepted the Rule of Law. Therefore, today's modern world order needs new kind of religion, which not only recognizes the morality and law but which is scientific one also.

As per my view Buddha Dhamma will be the best foundation to establish welfare State which assures relation between religion, morality and law at par with today's demands of modern society. One may raise the question how only Buddha Dhamma can maintain the relation between religion, morality and law? How Buddha Dhamma can give answer to today's movement - Occupy Wall Street, Corporate Corrupt Practices, Corruption and so on? To answer these questions I would like to emphasis on the **Madhyama Marga (Majjhima Patipada)**, of the Buddha.

1. There were two extremes, a life of pleasure and a life of self-mortification. One says let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die. The other says, kill all vasanas (desires) because they bring rebirth.
2. He rejected both as unbecoming to man. Because - (a) So long as we remains active and continues to lust after either worldly or heavenly pleasures, all mortification is in vain, and (b) we cannot be free from self by leading a wretched life of self-mortification if we do not thereby succeed in quenching the fires of lust. Unless and until one has been conquered one self and become free from lust, not desire worldly pleasures, and the satisfaction of natural wants then nothing will defile him/her. So everyone should eat and drink according to the needs of body. The sensuality of all kinds is enervating. The sensual man is a slave of his passion. All pleasure seeking is degrading and vulgar. He further said that satisfy the needs of life is not an evil, to keep the body in good health is a duty, or

otherwise you shall not be able to keep your mind strong and clear and have the lamp of wisdom burning.

So these two extremes which man ought not to follow the habitual indulgence on the one hand, of those things whose attraction depends upon the passions, and especially of sensuality a low and pagan way of seeking satisfaction, unworthy, unprofitable and the habitual practice thereof, and on the other band, of asceticism or self-mortification, which is painful unworthy and unprofitable.

3. Therefore there is a need to follow the middle path which avoids both these extremes. This middle path i.e. Dhamma (religion) had nothing to do with God and Soul. Dhamma had nothing to do with life after death. Nor has his Dhamma any concern with rituals and ceremonies.
4. He discussed basic postulate of Dhamma - (a) Man and the relation of man to man in his life on earth, (b) Men are living in sorrow, in misery and poverty. The world is full of suffering and that how to remove this suffering from the world is the only purpose of Dhamma. Nothing else is Dhamma. The recognition of the existence of suffering and to show the way to remove suffering is the foundation and basis of his Dhamma. This can be the only foundation and justification for Dhamma. A religion which fails to recognize this is no religion at all. Whatsoever recluses Brahmins (i.e., preachers of religion) understand not, as it really is, that the misery in the world and the escape therefrom, is the main problem of Dhamma, such recluses and Brahmins in my opinion are not to be regarded as, recluses and Brahmins; nor have those worthies come to know fully of themselves what in this very life is the real meaning of Dhamma.

One may think that if the foundation of Dhamma is the recognition of the existence of suffering and the removal of suffering, how Dhamma removes suffering? The Buddha's answer to this question is that if every person followed -

(1) **The Path of Purity**⁸ (Pancha shila) - It teaches that a person who wishes to be good must recognize some principles as principles of life. The recognition of the principles is most essential for every man. For every man must have a standard by which to judge whatever he does. And these principles according to my teachings constitute the standard. One may raise question why are these principles worthy of recognition as a standard of life.” The answer to this question you will find for yourselves, if you ask: “Are these principles good for the individual?” also if you ask: “Do they promote social good?” “If your answers to these questions are in the affirmative then it follows that the principles of my **Path of Purity** are worthy of recognition as forming a true standard of life.”

(2) **The Path of Righteousness**⁹ (Ashtanga Marga) - It is nothing but path of righteousness it is having eight constituents to make a life right one. They are (a) Right Views - to remove Avijja (Nescience), (b) Right aims, aspirations and ambitions - it means that aims, aspirations and ambitions shall be noble and praise- worthy and not ignoble and unworthy, (c) Right Speech - to make speech sensible and to the purpose, (d) Right behaviour - every action should be founded on respect for the feelings and rights of others i.e. the course of conduct which must be in harmony with the fundamental laws of existence, (e) Right livelihood - the individual should earn his livelihood without causing injury or injustice to others, (f) Right Endeavour - It has four purposes - 1) To prevent states of mind which are in conflict with the Ashtangamarga, 2) To suppress such states of mind which may already have arisen, 3) To bring into existence states of mind which will help a man to fulfill the requirements of the Ashtangamarga and 4) To promote the further growth and increase of such states of mind as already may have arisen. This ultimately helps to remove Avijja, (g) Right mindfulness and thoughtfulness - It means constant wakefulness of the mind i.e. watch and ward by the mind over the evil passions, (h) Right concentration of mind - It trains the mind to concentrate and to think of some Kusala Kamma (Good Deeds and Thoughts) during concentration and

thereby eliminate the tendency of the mind to be drawn towards Akusala Kamma (Bad Deeds and Bad Thoughts) arising from the hindrances.

These **Ashtanga Marga** ultimately helps the man to overcome five hindrances i.e. covetousness, ill-will, sloth and torpor, doubt and indecision, which are really fetters in the living right life.

Buddha raised the question that “Is not personal purity the foundation of good in the world? Is not personal purity undermined by covetousness, passion, ignorance, the destruction of life, theft, adultery and lying? Is it not necessary for personal purity to build up sufficient strength of character so that these evils should be kept under control? How can a man be the instrument of good if he has no personal purity in him? Why do men not mind enslaving or dominating others? Why do men not mind making the lives of others unhappy? Is it not because men are not righteous in their conduct towards one another? Will not the practice of the Ashtanga Marga, the path of right views, right aims, right speech, right livelihood, right means, right mindfulness, right perseverance, and right contemplation, in short, the Path of Righteousness, if followed by everyone, remove all injustice and inhumanity that man does to man? The answer will be “Yes.”

(3) **The Path of Virtue**”, it would bring about the end of all suffering. These are states of Perfection the path of virtue meant the observance of the virtues called: (1) Sila - it is moral temperament, the disposition not to do evil and the disposition to do good to be ashamed of doing wrong. To avoid to do evil for fear of punishment is Sila. Sila means fear of doing wrong, (2) Dana - it means the giving of one's possessions, blood and limbs and even one's life, for the good of others without expecting anything in return,, (3) Upekkha - It means detachment as distinguished from indifference. It is a state of mind where there is neither like nor dislike. Remaining unmoved by the result and yet engaged in the pursuit of it, (4) Nekkhamma - It is nothing but renunciation of the pleasures of the world, (5) Virya - It is doing with all your might whatever you have undertaken to- do with

never a thought of turning back, whatever you have undertaken to do, (6) Khanti - it means not to meet hatred by hatred is the essence of it. For hatred is not appeased by hatred. It is appeased only by forbearance, (7) Succa - It is nothing but truth. A person must never tell a lie. His speech must be truth and nothing but truth, (8) Adhithana - It is nothing but resolute determination to reach the goal, (9) Karuna - This means loving kindness to human beings and (10) Maitri - It is nothing but extending fellow feeling to all beings, not only to one who is a friend but also to one who is a foe: not only to man but to all living beings.

Buddha raised the questions Is not Dana necessary to remove the suffering of the needy and the poor and to promote general good? Is not Karuna necessary to be drawn to the relief of poverty and suffering wherever it exists? Is not Nekkhamma necessary to selfless work? Is not Uppekha necessary for sustained endeavour even though there is no personal gain? Is not love for man necessary?" He emphasized that Love is not enough; what is required is Maitri. It is wider than love. It means fellowship not merely with human beings but with all living beings. It is not confined to human beings. Is not such Maitri necessary? What else can give to all living beings the same happiness which one seeks for one's own self, to keep the mind impartial, open to all, with affection for everyone and hatred for none?" The answer to all this questions is ultimately "Yes."

Besides, this he said that the practice of these virtues must, however, be accompanied by Prajna, i.e., intelligence. One may raise the question that why Prajna is necessary? The answer to this question depends upon answer to the question that the qualities of a good man are - do no evil, think nothing that is evil, get his livelihood in no evil way and say nothing that is evil or is likely to hurt anyone. But is doing good deeds blindly to be welcomed? Certainly the answer is "no". If it was enough, then a tiny babe could be proclaimed to be always doing good. For as yet, the babe does not know what a body means, much less will it do evil with its body beyond kicking about: it does not know what speech

is, much less will it say anything evil beyond crying; it does not know what thought is, beyond crying with delight; it does not know what livelihood is, much less will it get its living in an evil way, beyond sucking its mother. The Path of Virtue must, therefore, be subject to test of Prajna which is another name for understanding and intelligence. There is also another reason why Prajna-Paramitas is so important and so necessary. There must be Dana. But without Prajna, Dana may have a demoralizing effect. Further, there must be Karuna. But without Prajna, Karuna may end in supporting evil. Every act of Paramitas must be tested by Prajna Paramitas which is another name for wisdom. He premise that there must be knowledge and consciousness of what wrong conduct is, how it arises; similarly, there must also be knowledge and consciousness of what is right conduct and wrong conduct. Without such knowledge there cannot be real goodness though the act may be good. That is why Prajna is a necessary virtue.

Buddha knows that one may express his view against Dhamma that it is pessimistic because it calls the attention of mankind to the existence of suffering. But such a view of against Dhamma would be wrong. No doubt his Dhamma recognizes the existence of suffering but forget not that it also lays equal stress on the removal of suffering. His Dhamma has in it both hope and purpose. Its purpose is to remove Avijja it means ignorance of the existence of suffering.

There is hope in it because it shows the way to put an end to human suffering. Therefore, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar had found Buddha as a reformer, full of the most earnest moral purpose and trained in all the intellectual culture of not only his time but today's modern changed circumstances also, who had the originality and the courage to put forth deliberately and with a knowledge of opposing views, the doctrine of a salvation to be found here, in this life, in inward change of heart to be brought about by the practice of self-culture and self-control. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar said that what the Buddha calls Dhamma differs fundamentally from what is called religion. What the Buddha calls Dhamma is analogous to what

the European theologians call Religion. But there is no greater affinity between the two. On the other hand, the differences between the two are very great. On this account some European theologians refuse to recognize the Buddha's Dhamma as Religion. There need be no regrets over this. The loss is theirs. It does no harm to the Buddha's Dhamma. Rather, it shows what is wanting in Religion. Instead of entering into this controversy it is better to proceed to give an idea of Dhamma and show how it differs from Religion. As stated earlier religion, it is said, is personal and one must keep it to oneself. One must not let it play its part in public life. Contrary to this, Dhamma is social. It is fundamentally and essentially so. Dhamma is righteousness, which means right relations between man and man in all spheres of life. From this it is evident that one man if he is alone does not need Dhamma. But when there are two men living in relation to each other they must find a place for Dhamma whether they like it or not, they cannot escape from it. One may raise the question what is Dhamma? And why is Dhamma necessary? According to the Buddha, Dhamma consists of **Prajna** and **Karuna**. 'What is Prajna? And why Prajna? Prajna is nothing but understanding. The Buddha made Prajna one of the two corner-stones of His Dhamma because he did not wish to leave any room for superstition. What is Karuna? And why Karuna? Karuna is love. Because, without it Society can neither live nor grow, that is why the Buddha made it the second corner-stone of His Dhamma. This is the definition of the Buddha's Dhamma. How different is this definition of Dhamma from that of Religion. So ancient, yet so modern is the definition of Dhamma given by the Buddha. So aboriginal yet so original. Not borrowed from anyone, yet so true. A unique amalgam of Pradnya and Karuna is the Dhamma of the Buddha. This is the basic the difference between Religion and Dhamma .

6. Conclusion

In conclusion I would like to say that the Buddha Dhamma so ancient but has given correct place to the morality and law, and is the ray of hop to contemporary society. Therefore, todays should

be based on Dhamma, which is enforced by law, and govern the people wherever they fails to observe the path of righteousness. So the Buddha Dhamma is the only answer to the recent movement started at national and international level **viz.** -Occupy Wall Street, Corporate corrupt practices like inter trading, violation of Human Rights, Right to Development, Good Governance and so on, because all these movement are meant to eradicate the greed, passion or lust for the wealth from the powerful sections of society. But it is pertinent to note that these movements are not set on the proper basis or foundation or principles this consequently may be resulted into state of anarchy and chaos in those countries. This state will deny justice, liberty, equality and fraternity to everybody hence this state is not beneficial for the human society as a whole. So I am of the view that these movements should make Buddha and His Dhamma the guiding principle or basis because the Buddha and His Dhamma stresses on righteousness, which means right relations between man and man in all spheres of life. When there are two men living in relation to each other they must find a place for Dhamma as a law and they cannot escape from it. Moreover, his Dhamma consists of **Prajna** and **Karuna**. Because, without it today's modern society neither live nor grow. Hence, only Buddha Dhamma gives scientific answer to the today's social, economic and political problems faced by contemporary society.

Notes

1. Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics Vol. X p. 669.
2. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar writings and speeches: The Buddha And His Dhamma, Vol. 11, Education Department, Government of Maharashtra, Siddhartha Publication's, 4th Edt. Government Photozinco Press, Pune 1991, p. 225
3. Ibid p. 315
4. Ibid
5. Ibid p. 315
6. E.g. present crises in USA and European countries.
7. E.g. Godhara carnage in Gujarat, India
8. Ibid 9. Supra note 2 p. 122
10. Ibid p. 123

Discriminating Social Structures and Empowering Religious Resources: A View on Interaction between Vulnerable Groups and Development

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We are at the cross-road now in our vision and practice of development. “The project of development has been subjected to much criticism and rethinking in the recent years in the midst of which agenda of development has been broadened to include human development from mere economic development and rise in per capita income.”¹

1. Journeying through the Evolution of ‘Development’

The above quotation shows us the shifts that have taken place in the very conception of ‘development.’ Development theorists identify three post-world War II phases of development. In the first phase (1947-1949), the liminal phase between the world war and the beginning of the cold war, the world grappled with the future after an extreme crisis. In this period, development was seen as a ‘work of hope.’² It primarily aimed at alleviating poverty. It did not go beyond economic growth. In the second phase (1949—1989) of the cold war, development entered the domain of politics, application and administration. In 1960, development was defined as ‘growth with change,’ referring to economic and cultural change, influenced by structural functionalism.³ Development thus meant a simultaneous transformation in

multiple dimensions such as polity, economics and culture. In the mid 1970s, there again occurred a shift of focus in development which aimed at a decent standard of living for all humans, in line with the basic human rights as defined in the UN charter, and measured by 'human development indicators.'⁴ In the third phase (1990-), the natural environment and its ecology became integrated into the development discourse, and 'sustainable development' became the watchword. Sustainable development drew attention to marginal regions and people, like the gold miners in the Amazon, the peasants in Africa, the hill tribes in Thailand etc., who were previously rather ignored.⁵ Development had little to do with equity, justice or with people and social relations since the subject matter at that time was growth and not distribution. It was in this context that the UN General Assembly resolution called for the renewal of political will to invest in people and their well-being in what could be the trend setter for the next millennium, and set up a special committee in the year 2000 to review the process of development.⁶ Following these, a whole array of new discourses of development, such as Amartya Sen's idea of development as freedom (i.e., development as expansion of substantive freedom to achieve alternative functions), development as human dignity and human rights,⁷ development as 'global responsibility,' development as cultivation of 'self'⁸ etc., has acquired significance in the development theories. In the context of rural areas in India and its marginal people, the concept of development as human dignity, development as freedom and the notion of integral development which includes ecology assume significance for this article.

2. Religion as a Protagonist of Human Dignity in Process of Development

If development is understood as promotion/enhancement of overall human dignity, religions can be seen as contributors to the process of development in countries like India and Africa, also because they have the potentiality to effect social emancipation and uphold human dignity, which they have imparted to the

oppressed sections of society. Recent debates on religious conversions in India highlight the fact that the converts moved to a new religion not so much for religious reasons but to change their socio-economic status. Oddie and Forrester's works on conversion to Christianity⁹ show that while conversion is the story that narrates how vulnerable groups gained social mobility, self-respect and dignity, it is also very well synchronized with the spread of a particular religion—which promised social emancipation and political security. Chad's (2008) work on Satnami Christians, Jose Maliekal's research on the Madiggas of Konasema in Andhra Pradesh and Anthony Sebastin's study on the Christian Paraiyars of Chengelpet district of Tamilnadu are other examples.¹⁰

Is Hinduism in any way coextensive with development? The answer to this questions is neither no nor yes. As for the major Hinduism, when it was spread to the west by the Indian Diaspora, it did contribute to the construction of their identity in a new land. It sustained their identity in the new place as people of another ethnicity and accompanied them in their initiative to maintain their self-worth. In that sense, for the upstart Indian middle class it has played a role of accompaniment and support in the process of their development.¹¹

As regards the folk/village Hinduism, its relationship with economic development is multi-faceted. The studies done by the Subalterns Studies project and the like, highlight the role of religion as a subaltern agency in the process of emancipation of the marginalised peoples. The phenomena of Ayya Vazhi, Ramnami and Satnampanth movements show that the religious articulations of such kinds have emboldened people to appropriate the symbols and practices of purity, to defy and discontinue the old oppressive economic activities forced upon them by the caste system, which were seen as polluting and thus subjugating them. They sought to break the shackles of economic oppression and to explore new opportunities for economic pursuits that drastically altered and uplifted their economic situation, as we see in the case of the

Shanars of Tamilnadu. My own research in the district of Tirunelveli, Tamilnadu indicates that the religious terrain has enabled the subalterns to gain new socio-economic positions. Besides, it can become a site for them not only to display their newly gained economic status, but also to assert their new social ascendancy whereby contestation and inversion of the old social norms of caste hierarchy are triggered off by the subalterns. Thus the subaltern religious initiatives enabled the vulnerable groups to restore their lost human dignity. The above mentioned studies demonstrate that Weber's thesis on the negative role of Indian religions¹² needs to be reformulated.

Further, the latest theorising on 'development' as the promotion of basic human values show that religion and development can move closer to each other in this mission. For instance, Quarles Van Ufford and Giri point out that development has to become a praxis, engaging in the recovery of the original meaning of intervention: *intervenire*, a process of 'coming in between' which involves much more than 'doing'. It should involve love, care and good will.¹³ Accordingly, they suggest that development has to be reconstituted as "a relational field of sharing and contestation where coming in between involves establishing an appropriate relationship between care of the self and care of the other."¹⁴ Religion, as a moral interlocutor in any culture, can positively and constructively 'intervene' in cultural practices and social institutions, and can effectively become a partner with 'development' in constituting, confirming and sustaining an appropriate relationship between care of the self and care of the other. However, a caveat is in place here: "care for the other carries the seeds of paternalism."¹⁵ Both the projects of development and religious engagement in the world should take the necessary precaution not to be trapped by a kind of condescending paternalism.

As Giri points out, understanding the project of development in terms of the human (human right, human dignity) has helped only the broadening of the agenda of development, which perhaps

lacks its complementary component of 'deepening.' Giri in his book suggests that this deepening can be actualized by bringing both an aesthetic and an ethical perspective and mode of participation to this field of relationship.¹⁶

Further, the care of the poor and the vulnerable, which is now the concern of the ethics of development has been, for centuries, the legacy of most religions' teaching on love. All religions, be they Christianity, Islam, Jainism or Hinduism, in varying degrees, have given some importance or the other to the care of the vulnerable people, the 'poor' and the needy¹⁷ especially in rural India. Religion's proactive role in the development project calls for new ways of theorising which will take into account, on the one hand the different concepts of the 'other' given in different religious traditions, and on the other hand, reinterpret them in a manner that will pave the way for a better understanding of the self that will lead to better inter-religious dialogues/ praxis-collaborations to improve the lots of the vulnerable groups in rural India. Such efforts will bring together different religions not so much to fight with one another to prove one's supremacy over the other but to work for the well-being of humanity especially for the vulnerable groups. In order to do so, the philosophers and theologians of each religious tradition have to highlight each one's value-specific and praxis-specific ethos and its unique selling point that would benefit the present and the future of humanity.

The folk religions, which do not have such official spokespersons though, do not remain indifferent to the process of development but connected to it directly or indirectly in different ways and capacities.

3. Increasing Diversity of Rural Realities and Folk Religions

One of the felt impacts of the process of globalization on Indian society is that it has given rise to new forms of diversities not only in the urban areas but also in the rural areas. The homogenous agrarian feudal society which had for centuries maintained a

particular type of dependency relationship between the high-caste landlord and the low caste labourers is experiencing instability now. The families and children of low caste background have begun to have access to education and employment, and they have obtained multiple identities from such options including others provided by the modern nation state and its democratic political processes. Membership in a political party or in an NGO etc.. has come their way which did not exist earlier. It cannot be denied that these changes have brought about instability, fluidity and diversity in the village environments. The vulnerable groups have started going to schools and colleges, building houses, wearing clothes and living life styles which are not very different from those of the dominant castes. Though these changes take place more rapidly in the urban areas than the rural India, yet such changes do get transposed to the villages as well. The emerging diversities, more often than not, do get more pronounced and displayed in the villages during the celebrations and festivals of the village folk deities. During the celebration of the festival of the folk deities the vulnerable groups do demonstrate their newly obtained economic developments. For instance, during my field-works in the years 2001-2004, I witnessed ever-growing extravaganza and festivity of *kodai* (three day folk religious festival so called in Tirunelveli district in Tamilnadu) by the Dalits. It apparently indicates that the folk religious festivals can function as an arena for displaying vulnerable peoples' newly acquired socio-economic status, and for their celebration of the autonomy of social identity. For instance, the spectacular display of fire-works which goes on for a continuous half-an-hour or so after *vettai* (ritual hunting) is said to be one of the distinguishing features of the *kodai* of the Dalits in Naduvakurichi village. They spend about sixty-five thousand rupees for the fire-works. For the vulnerable group, which was oppressed and kept voiceless for centuries, the fire-works do speak for their newly gained social ascendancy. Similarly, some other rituals like *samiyattam* (possession dance) etc.. were performed by the Dalits much more pompously than in other places. Speaking about the grand

celebration of *kodai*, Mines notes that they “build up fame or ‘bigness’ (*perumai*) for their community through largess and dense display. The *kodai* was virtually and aurally packed. Energy was palpable, as many young men were for the first time seized in possession by the gods. They enlarged, renewed, and decorated the shrine elaborately. They rented a sound system to blare music across and beyond Yanaimangalam’s fields to reach neighboring villages.”¹⁸

Thus folk religions become a site for the representations of the collective self of the vulnerable groups—the self which is developed, feels confident and dignified, and articulates itself and its level of development through symbolic actions, performances and metaphors.

4. Community Participation, De-centralized Governance and Folk Religions

When we pay attention to how the marginal people organize the celebration of the folk temple festivals, we realize that they have in place a very good system of de-centralised governance and community participation that elicits co-operation from almost all members of the rural community. This system come handy in many ways for the rural development. It has been well recorded by many writers how the celebration of rural festival involves a thorough preparation and meticulous planning that involve the villagers and the community as a whole. Corporate planning and corporate thinking begins to dominate the village life once the village community decides to host a festival for the deity. Accordingly, collective interest takes precedence over individual commitments. The habits and attitudes of giving cooperation for the common cause are doubtless learnt and transmitted in the celebration of folk religious festivals. Now, in the context of working for the rural development through the bodies like SHG’s (Self Help Groups), experiences of collaboration and cooperation learnt thorough the celebration of folk festivals can become very valuable not only to elicit support from the people but also to

identify the like-minded folks who can become effective agents of SHG's structure. Further, the folk religious festivals provide a platform to carry out the process of rural development by the people very effectively. In view of the festival, the village as a whole gets geared up to provide hospitality and infrastructural facilities to the guests who come to attend the festival and the rural groups do deliberately make it a occasion to demand from the local government bodies many such things as laying of new roads to the village, street lights and drinking water facilities etc..Such demands are often complied by the concerned government authorities lest they incur the wrath of the local gods.

For instance, in one of the villlages, the Dalit *samiyadie* (the shaman so called in South Tamilnadu) made use of this occasion of divination for negotiation with the local MLAs and other administrative officers for the implementation of some welfare schemes for the Dalit village. I heard the *samiyadie* telling the MLA "I have blessed you every year, raised you up to this level and taken care of your family. But what have you done for me and for my people? For the last six months they are without proper drinking water. No lights in their streets. If you leave them in misery, you cannot please me". To this the MLA replied "*Sami* (god), Do not turn your anger against me. Something went wrong somewhere. I will immediately take care of it all." And when I visited the village the next year, the infrastructural facilities had improved considerably. In this context, it is to be noted that the favours are demanded in the name of folk gods and goddesses. But these demands are often met because neglecting these demands amounts to displeasing the gods. It might be that in most cases these are done more out of fear than out of piety or reverence for the deity. And it seems that the fear factor becomes the context which is capitalized upon by the vulnerable groups for the rural development.

5. Individual Interests and Community Values in Market Economy and Folk Religions

Market economy in third-world countries like India has helped marginal groups to get new jobs and triggered off initiatives among them, in small ways, to compete in the open market. Thus the life situations of these groups and of their villages have improved. But however, one of the fall-outs of market economy is the creation of individualism, fetishization of money and commodification of relations. As a result, the individuals who have progressed on account of their individual hard work and independent thinking can turn out to be indifferent to the community's needs and neglect the community's values of sharing and serving. In such situations, some of the folk religious practices such as possession of gods/goddesses becomes effective means to question those individuals and remind them of their sense of belonging to the community and their failure to adhere to the values of community. The common folk can make use of these practices to remind the upstart individuals of their duties and responsibilities towards others in the community. The shaman or the medium through which god acts would give stern warnings and suggest corrective measures or prevail upon them to share what they have with others. For instance Jeffery G Snodgrass¹⁹ has made a very interesting study on the low-status Bhats in Rajasthan in which he shows how one of its members, Bedami gets possessed many a times and acts as a medium of her husband's lineage goddess, Chavanda Mata. Ramu has entered the new market economy in a manner unlike other Bhats—as a paid employee at a local folklore institute. This job seems to regulate his life and values in ways that other new Bhat pursuits do not. Ramu's pursuit of a regular wage, personal savings, and even life insurance has made him to distance himself from his community members. As a result, he has failed to partake in Bhat's core community values of sharing, co-operation and loyalty. Hence his lineage goddess through the medium of his wife rebukes him for his attitude of destructive stinginess and forgetfulness towards his community and convinces Ramu to

spend on the community, thus “fixing his mind” and “teaching him how to behave.”

Though Snodgrass’ data calls for multiple narratives/analysis to understand this ambiguous and ambivalent relationship between the market economy and the vulnerable groups, it does throw light on the role of folk religious practice in constructing a discourse of contestation with the market economy when the latter tends to generate values of individualism, greed etc.. that goes against the traditional values of vulnerable groups such as sharing, solidarity and loyalty.

6. Marginality, Honour and Change of Religion

If the common understanding of development means improvement of the human life, for the vulnerable people this development is necessarily inclusive of their social existence as well and compellingly implies emancipation from the situation of marginality. That is why the Dalits in their developmental efforts seek for the removal of their social inequality and restoration of human dignity. This understanding would not only explain why there exists so much of ‘politics of honour,’ among the rural folk -especially among the vulnerable groups, but also provide a crucial key to the understanding of conversion stories among the vulnerable groups. The ‘politics of honour,’ prevalent among the marginal people is basically an outcome of people’s perceived threat to their vulnerable human dignity. Diana Mines’ study on the village of Yanaimangalam,²⁰ Lamb’s work on Ramnamis²¹ and David Hardiaman’s work on the Devi movement²² are good examples of how religious resources are tapped by the vulnerable groups for the ‘politics of honour’ to restore their human dignity and exercise their agency.

Further, as Mosse²³ and others have noted, the recent sociological studies done on conversions among the Dalits hold that the view that conversion had to do with “the rejection of social inferiority and the affirmation of positive social identity.”²⁴ Thus conversion looked at from the view-point of converts themselves

obtains a different meaning. Their motivations and objectives to subject themselves to the project of conversion was very different from those of the missionaries and other agencies. For the vulnerable groups, conversion actually meant a better mundane life and a new socio-cultural situation than a promise of an eternal heaven. It should be also noted that while new religious identity was largely seen as a mark of independence and upward social mobility, it also true that the new religion did fail the marginal groups by providing newer contexts for the reproduction of caste inequality and discrimination.²⁵

7. Folk Religion as an Interface between Development and Ecology

“Earth is our mother. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth. If men spit upon the ground, they spit upon themselves. This we know: The Earth does not belong to man; man belongs to the earth. This we know. All things are connected like the blood which unites only family,”²⁶ answered the native American Chief Seattle, in 1854, to the American President who had asked him to sell him some land. It was a strange question to put to a Red man for whom the earth was sacred beyond buying or selling. The words of the native American represent very powerfully the mindset of the local and indigenous peoples across the nations with regard to their inalienable relationship with the mother earth. With the fast spreading process of globalization of capitalist economics in the late twentieth century, the vulnerable native peoples have come under intense pressures to open their lands for resource-exploitation. However, indigenous peoples have alternative development models that value the land and nature very differently from the capitalist sustainability models²⁷. They embody alternative models of sustainable life, even though the natives use those lands and living beings for food, habitat, and trade. Such alternative models of sustainability are most boldly demonstrated in their symbolic and religious realm. Besides, they also appropriate the religious realm for the confrontation with outside forces and contestation of their powers. The emergence

of phenomena such as the “Cargo Cults” of the Pacific region, the “Ghost Dance” of the North American plains or the “Mau-Mau” uprisings of East Asia, and the Devi movement in North India are all social movements which manifest strong religious expressions whose inner dynamics are connected deeply to the local ecology. John Grim’s volume²⁸ takes note of the small-scale native communities who, on the one hand, manage acceptable forms of modernization through the insights of elders and the revelations of dreamers and visionaries, and on the other hand also mount resistance to development schemes in which they have no voice. An emerging school of thought, known as political ecology,²⁹ has as its focus of study the efforts to subvert indigenous cultures by the development agendas. The perspective is much more receptive to considering indigenous religions and other cultural knowledge systems as contributing more to production than earlier Marxist-oriented political economy analysis conceded.³⁰ The focus here is on the imaginative act (closely connected to indigenous /folk religions), which is present in indigenous societies, whereby local environments become central to people’s identity. Richard Peet and Michael Watts³¹ call this imaginative act as “environmental imaginary,” which means a way of *imaging* nature, including visions of those forms of social and individual practice which are ethically proper and morally right with regard to a particular natural environment. Environmental imaginaries are usually expressed in abstract, mystical, and spiritual lexicons, and typically developed through regional discursive formations. It is to be noted that environmental imageries enable the vulnerable indigenous groups to review and contest specific processes of developments including the political and economic agendas of different developmental projects that affect the local ecology.

In fact, the folk religious world-view of the vulnerable groups are more holistic than the technology- centered modern scientific outlook. They are based on the age-old wisdom of the indigenous people, the vulnerable Adivasis and the Dalits that realized long ago that the care of the human is intrinsically related to the care of nature. The actualisation of the human cannot take place in

isolation or in the abstract. It has to take place in the concrete material world and along with the other creatures and beings in the world. This implies that, during the process of transformation of the humans, the human beings have to work for the promotion of well-being for the whole of the cosmos. While such a task calls for a proactive involvement of the humans in the world, it implies a total rejection of any dichotomy between matter and spirit, sacred and profane. This entails a holistic view of the universe which underscores a fundamental unity between the humans and the cosmos. This basic unity and the symbiotic relationship between the humans and the cosmos is best inscribed, created and established in the embodied human beings through concrete human practices. Such human practices obtain religious overtones in most of the cultures of the vulnerable people for whom the sacred character of nature is commemorated and reproduced through folk religious rituals. For instance, Madhu Kanna³² holds that the folk festival of *navapatrika* worship can be related to the issues of ecological sensibility. Similarly the various folk festivals such as *karam* in the tribal belt of Chotanagpur, *kodai* in South India and various season-transition festivals in different parts of India are at once the expressions of the religious and the ecological concerns of the vulnerable rural folk. Even other folk religious rituals such as *Bihu* in Assam or *Pongal* in Tamilnadu play a major role in making humans realise the inalienable relationship between nature and humans. More often than not, religious beliefs/practices and the earth's ecology are inextricably linked, and organically related. "Religious beliefs—especially those concerning the nature of powers that create and animate—become an effective part of ecological systems."³³ Rather than the major religious traditions, it is the folk/indigenous religious traditions which ensure the creation and the maintenance of the human being's intrinsic relationship with the natural environment.

Conclusion

In this article, we have seen that religion continues to be an enduring tribute to humankind's infinite resourcefulness

and adaptability³⁴ in coping with the changes and problems that humanity faces in its onward journey towards new horizons. There was a time in the nineteenth century when the thinkers (sold to “secularisation theory”) saw in religion an archaic mode of thought and action that would one day recede under the force of the modern institutions of science, law, politics, and education. However, what we witness in the 21st century is just the opposite. There is not only a proliferation of religious activities in different parts of the world in different forms and intensities, but a percolation of the religious into virtually every quarter of the human sphere. The continuation of religion in its old forms and the emergence of it in new avatars make us look for its relevance and meaning as appropriated by its local social actors. In this essay, we have attempted to interpret and analyze how the vulnerable groups such as Adivasis and other low-castes make religion as an interface to deal with issues that arise between their collective inter-subjectivity and the outer world which under the spell of modernization and transformation that threatens not only their stability but also that of the cosmos. Further, in folk religion the vulnerable groups could also sometime find an alternative space to interrogate the state bureaucracy’s discriminatory approaches in the implementation of government’s welfare schemes for their neighborhood and to contest the discriminatory caste system and its principles of its inequality, thereby upholding their human dignity and promoting their social progress . Thus the paper has taken issues with Max Weber’s view that Indian religions obstruct change and development and has proved him wrong by showing that folk religions are pro-transformative, innovative, vibrant, performative, always ready to respond and adjust to the signs of the time.

Notes

1. Ananta Kumar Giri, *New Horizons of Social Theory*, Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 2006. p.200.
2. Cf. Wiebe Nauta, “A Moral Critique of Fieldwork,” in Ananta Kumar Giri et al.(eds.)*The Development of Religion and the Religion of Development*, CW Delft: Eburon Delft, 2004. Pp.89-100, p. 90.

3. Cf. Rudiger Kroff & Heiko Schrader, "Does the End of Development Revitalise History?" in Ananta Kumar Giri et al. *The Development of Religion and the Religion of Development*, 9-17, p.12.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*, p.14.
6. Cf. John Mohan Razu, "Introduction," *Bangalore Theological Forum*, 3&4 (30), 1998, A Special Issue on Development. pp 2-6.
7. Cf. Bas de Gaay Forman, "In Search for a New Paradigm" in Ananta Kumar Giri et al. *The Development of Religion and the Religion of Development*, pp. 18-28.
8. Cf. Ananta Kumar Giri, *New Horizons of Social Theory*, pp.199-222.
9. Cf. Oddie, G.A., ed., *Religion in South Asia: Religious Conversion and Revival Movements in South Asia in Medieval and Modern Times*, London: Curzon Press, 1977, and Duncan Forrester, *Caste and Christianity: Attitudes and Policies on Caste of Anglo-Saxon Protestant Missions in India*, New Jersey: Curzon Press, 1980.
10. Cf. Chad M. Bauman, *Christian Identity and Dalit Religion in Hindu India, 1868-1947*, Michigan / Cambridge, U.K: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company Grand Rapids, 2008. The works of Jose Maliekal and Anthony Sebastin are PhD theses done in University of Madras at the Department of Christian Studies.
11. Cf. Aparna Rayaprol, "Can You Talk Indian? Shifting Notions of Community and Identity in the Indian Diaspora," in Surinder S.Jodhka, *Community and Identities*, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2001, pp. 163-190.
12. Cf. Max Weber, *The Religion of India*, trans. H. Gerth & D. Martindale, Free Press, New York, 1958. The studies that analysed these questions further are: Kapp, *Hindu Culture, Economic Development and Economic Planning in India*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1963 and Mishra, *Hinduism and Economic Growth*, Oxford University Press, Bombay, 1962.
13. Cf. Wiebe Nauta, "A Moral Critique of Fieldwork," in Ananta Kumar Giri et al. *The Development of Religion and the Religion of Development*, 89-100, p. 91.
14. *Ibid.*
15. Quarles van Ufford, Ph. and Ananta Kumar Giri, "Development as a shared responsibility: Ethics, aesthetics and a creative shaping of hu-

man possibilities” in Ufford and Giri (eds), *A Moral Critique of development*, Routledge, 2003.

16. Cf. Ananta Kumar Giri, *New Horizons of Social Theory*, p.200.
17. One might wonder if Hinduism has an other-centered ethics. The concepts of *daya*, *dana*, *seva* and *lokasangraha* in Hinduism show have the other as a reference point for the pursuit of one’s *dharma*. The total welfare of all (*lokasangraha*) is integral to one’s liberation. For instance Gita says, “Lokasangraham evapi sampasyan kartum arhasi (3:20).” It means one’s action, which leads to salvation, has to be for *lokasangraha*. The first verse of *Isa Upanishad* states, “Behold everything in the form of God”. This ‘advaitic’ statement underlies the fact of the fundamental unity of all beings, and should create a deep respect for all forms of life and cultivate a sense of equality among all beings. Later *visistadvaita* philosophy and other bhakti schools of Vedanta viewed the whole world and the human beings either as different parts or as different aspects of one God. This indicates how the concept of the ‘other’ understood as a reality outside one’s self is regarded *metaphysically* sacred in Hindu tradition.
18. Cf. Diane P. Mines “Hindu Nationalism, Untouchable Reform, and the Ritual Production of a South Indian Village,” *American Ethnologist* 29/1 (February 2002), 58-85, p.70.
19. Jeffrey G. Snodgrass, “A Tale of Goddesses, Money, and Other Terribly Wonderful Things: Spirit Possession, Commodity Fetishism, and the Narrative of Capitalism in Rajasthan, India,” *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (Aug., 2002), pp. 602-636.
20. Diana P. Mines, *Fierce Gods: Inequality, Ritual and the Politics of Dignity in a South Indian Village* Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2005. 21 Ramdas Lamb, *Rapt in the Name: The Ramnamis, Ramnam, and Untouchable Religion in Central India*. Albany: State University of New York, 2002.
22. David Hardiman, *The Coming of Devi: Adivasi Assertion in Western India*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987.
23. David Mosse, “Catholic Church and Dalit Christian Activism in Contemporary Tamilnadu” in *Margins of Faith*, edited by Rowena Robinson and Marianus Kujur, Delhi: Sage, 2010, 235-64.
24. Ibid., 236.
25. Ibid., 235.

26. Siddhartha, "Earth Spirituality-a New Eco-social Paradigm" in John Clammer (ed.), *Socially Engaged Religions*, Bangalore: Books For Change, 2010, 41-49, p. 42.
27. Joan, Martinez-Alier, *Environmentalism of the Poor*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004.
28. John A. Grim, (ed.) *Indigenous Traditions and Ecology* pp. xxxviii-xxxix. Cambridge: Center for the Study of World Religions, 2001.
29. The Anthropologist Eric Wolf introduced the expression, 'political ecology' in 1972. Both anthropologists and geographers have shown interest in this field, which is growing in the contemporary world. Several journals started by activists carry the title 'Political Ecology' in Germany, Mexico, France, Austria, Italy and in other countries since the 1980s and early 1990s. See Martinez-Alier, *Environmentalism of the Poor*, page 71.
30. Grim, *Indigenous Traditions*, xl.
31. Richard Peet, & Michael Watts, *Liberation Ecologies: Environment, Development, Social Movements* London and New York: Routledge, 1996, 263.
32. Madhu Kanna, "The Ritual Capsule of Durga Puja: An Ecological Perspective," in Christopher Key Chapple et al. (eds.), *Hinduism and Ecology: The Intersection of Earth, Sky, and Water*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2001. 33 Sullivan, "Preface" to John A. Grim ed., *Indigenous Traditions and Ecology*, Centre for the Study of World Religions, Harvard University School, Massachusetts, Cambridge, 2001, p.xi.
34. Raymond T. Firth, *Religion* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 214.

Islam and Social Work: A Cultural Competency and Source for Social Work Practitioners

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Social work emphasis on the importance of understanding client's worldview for effective intervention. While practicing social work with different religious groups or communities it is significance of religious diversity for social work. For a believer a religion is a source for intervention. The social workers may identify those resources available through the religious communities. While working with minority communities such as Muslim. The social worker should integrate social work methods, Islamic problems solving, and human growth practice. The social workers must be aware about different levels of religiosity and acculturation within the Muslim community. He should be very familiar with the religious aspects such as Quran, Hadith, Shariat etc which are main aspects of Islam and having its impact on the followers. Moreover, the social workers need to be aware of the various challenges and problems of the Muslim community facing and search its solution in their religion. Therefore, the social worker must understand their worldview. In this article, we try link specific aspects of Islamic teachings to social work.

Cultural competency is must while working with the different ethnic groups. It encompasses with the cultural events, significance of ethnic communities, rituals in their life's etc. Intervening with

different cultural and religious groups, the culturally competent social practice essential. Rowena Fong (2008) has mentioned thoughts of culturally competent practice three parts; 1. Helping people of distinct cultural groups solve problems by incorporating their personal, family, and community strengths and resources, 2. Understanding their social and environmental contexts, especially in reference to racism, oppression, and discrimination; and 3. Using bicultural intervention that focus on cultural values and integrate them as strengths, and incorporating indigenous methods as well as western ones. culture is associated with race, gender, religious beliefs, socio-economics, political beliefs etc. it reflects the lifestyle practices of particular groups of people who are influenced by learned patterns of values, beliefs and social behavioural modalities(Lum:2000).

Culturally competent contextual social work practice assumes that people behave differently depending on their social environment experiences. Social worker collects information on all of the client's relevant experiences and utilizes culturally competent practice skills to understand the client's cultural contexts and the meaning of these experiences. Fongs (2004) has discussed four components of culturally competent contextual practice are 1 ecological and personal in environment model 2. Strengths based orientation using cultural values in assessment and intervention planning 3. The intersectionality of macro values and the application of differential assessments, and 4. An empowerment approach reflecting the biculturalization of intervention.

Objectives and methodology

The study intends to address a set of following three objectives.

1. To document the Islamic worldview in terms of cultural competencies for practitioners.
2. To find out the similarities in social work values and Islamic principles and

3. To study the Islamic approach towards current issues and strategies for intervention with Muslim communities.

For the purpose of study, two level discussion was conducted, i.e. discussion with religious scholars and social work practitioners. Discussion with Muslim scholars was intended to find out the Muslim world-view and Islamic teachings on different issues. Whereas another discussion was conducted with social workers to locate the difficulties and strategies/skills required while working with Muslim community.

1. The Islamic Worldview

Islam: Muhammad, who is viewed as the prophet and messenger of Islam, founded Islam in the sixth century. In Islam, it is believed that God has send number of messenger in the world. Muhammad was only one of a series of prophets, with Islam recognizing some of the prophets such as Jesus, Moses etc. the Quran is the only holy text of Islam. Muslims also respect many respected Christian figures such as the Virgin Mary.

Islam connotes different meaning, by religious meaning it is submission to God and in general, it means peace etc. Islam is classified as a religion, but it is actually way of life –affecting everything from personal hygiene to pattern of socialization (Springer: 2008). The word “Islam” is related to the Arabic word “salaam,” meaning peace or submission. Like Christianity and Judaism, Islam is at heart a peaceful religion, with teachings of religious tolerance and respect for other people and monotheistic religions included in the Qur’an. Radical elements of Islam have been more prominent in the news than peaceful Muslims.

Christianity, Islam, and Judaism all share traditions of prophets and peace, and emerged in the Middle East. While the religions have differences, they also share the idea of a single God and evolution of man on earth as Adam and Eve.

Quran: The teachings of Islam are found in the Qur'an, the Holy Book of Islam, and Muslims use verses of Qur'an in prayer. The book itself is considered sacred to Muslims, who handle the Qur'an with extreme care. The Quran is made up of 114 chapters known as "*Suras*" each is made up of varying number of verses, called "*Ayats*."

Hadith: Islam also has an oral tradition known as the Hadith, which deals with the life of Muhammad. The Hadith provides guidance for Muslims on issues, which may not be included in the Qur'an, and is considered a source of history as well as a religious text. In addition, it is a collection of statements and deeds of Muhammad that were written after the death of prophet. The Hadith consist of all the actions, sayings, decisions, and deeds of the Prophet. There are over 600,000 Hadith.

Sharia: The sharia is derived from the holy Quran. Sharia is a set of relatively fixed rules and guidelines for average Muslims and collection of principles and practices that govern the day-to-day life of Muslim. The sharia is simply the law, and there is no other; it is holy in that it derives from God, and is the external and unchangeable expression of God's commandments to mankind (Lewis: 1988). Shariat is guided primarily by the Qur'an, but also by the Hadith, depending on the region and interpreter. The Hadith are found in separate books from the Quran.

Shariat involves all of the social relations, as well as civil and criminal codes in society. Sharia, or Islamic religious law, provides the framework within which Islamic communities should exist, thus ensuring consistency with mandates of Quran (Starrett: 1998).

Five Pillars of Faith

The Followers of Islam are known as Muslims, while God is referred to as Allah. Five pillars of faith, which all Muslims are expected to follow, govern Islam. The pillars include i) faith in and submission to Allah, ii) a practice of daily prayer, iii) alms

giving and care for the needy, IV) fasting, and v) a pilgrimage to Mecca for Muslims who are able to undertake it.

1. Faith (Iman): the declaration of faith done by pronounce of Kalama-a-Shahadat. It means there is no God except God (Allah) and Mohammad is the messenger of God. IMAN: (Faith) The faith, like Five Pillars, can be divided in six parts. It means belief in 1. God and His Attributes, 2. Prophets, 3. Angels, 4. Sacred Books, 5. The Judgment Day and 6. Predestination.

2. Prayer (Salat): to pray that are performed Five times a day is obligatory for every Muslim. This pray is direct link between the worshipper and God. Salat provides an opportunity to every Muslim to assemble and interact with each other. Muslim meets each other daily at the time of pray and weekly on Friday, it is sector level. At the Eid prayer, Muslim gets together at city level and at the international level on Haji pilgrimage. Irrespective of social, ethnic and linguistic prejudices, the Muslims stand in neatly shoulder-to-shoulder in rows. Although, pray is preferred together in a mosque, a Muslim may pray almost anywhere.

3. Alms-giving (Zakat): the word zakat means both ‘purification’ and ‘growth’. This is one of the important aspects of Islam. It has made compulsory to every Muslim to pay a fixed proportion of their possessions for the welfare of the whole community, and the poor in particular. Each Muslim calculates his or her own zakat individuality. The calculation for zakat involves payment each year of two and a half percent of one’s savings or more as the case may be. Allah says “Mercy embraces everything and I shall ordain it for those who are God conscious and give the alms and who believe in our messages” (7:156).

4. Fasting: every year in the month of Ramadan, the Muslims fast from early dawn until sunset. Fasting is an act of worship like salat. Every year during the month of Ramadan, Muslims *fast* for the hours of daylight. Those who are sick, elderly, or on a journey, and women who are pregnant or nursing are exempted from the fast and are required to make up an equal number of fasts in later days. About fast, in holly Quran it is mentioned, “o you who

believe, fasting is prescribed for you as it was for those before you, that you may (learn self- restraint and) become pious.” (2:183). Fasting is not all about denying oneself the law food or drinks or sex alone ; it is to eschew all unlawful acts, which displeases his lord. Any unlawful activity, which violates the postulation in fasting, a Muslim, does not achieve anything out of his fasting except hunger as mentioned “Whoever does not abandon falsehood in word and deed, Allah does not require him to give up eating and drinking.” “Any are the people who fast but who gain nothing from their fast except hunger and thirst.”

5. Pilgrimage to Makah (Hajj): this is the fifth pillar of Islam. It is an obligation only for capable and competent individuals in terms of physical and financial. On pilgrimage, the Muslims from around the world assemble to perform the Hajj. It also signifies that all are one people belonging to one nation irrespective of caste, creed color or nationality.

Islam and Social Work Values

The values are the implicit and explicit ideas about what we cherish as ideal or preferable, which determines which goals and actions are evaluate as “Good”(dubois,mileay:1998). Values are foundational to social work practice. It provides a direction and focus, and lends professional authority for multi-layered social work practice (Khan: 2011). Patel Chhaya (2009) has explained comprehensive order of five values of Islam as; 1. the well-being (welfare) of the community is to be safeguarded. 2. In, Islam, all people are regarded as equal and alike (equality). It absorbed the peoples of different races, regions and religious into one coherent religio-cultural unit, stretching from Spain to central Asia and India. 3. There is a relationship between individual freedom and the community’s obligations to the individual. 4. Responsibilities and obligations are intrinsic to the people. An Islamic way of life is therefore more than a matter of consciences and conformity to law. 5. The principal of consultation in Islam is one of the core principles upon which relationship between people are based.

Service: Social workers' primary goal is to help people in need and to address social problems. Social workers elevate service to others above self-interest. Social workers draw on their knowledge, values, and skills to help people in need and to address social problems.

Islam has given great importance to the social services, as in holly Quran it is mentioned, "It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards East or West; but it is righteousness to believe in Allah and the Last Day and the Angels and the Book and the Messengers; to spend of your substance out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask; and for the ransom of slaves; to be steadfast in prayers and practice regular charity; to fulfill the contracts which you made; and to be firm and patient in pain (or suffering) and adversity and throughout all periods of panic. Such are the people of truth, the God fearing"(Quran 2: 177). "Serve God and join not any partners with Him; And do good to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, those in need, neighbours who are near, neighbours who are strangers, the companion of your side, the wayfarer (Ye meet) And what your right hand trosses, for God loveth not the arrogant, the vainglorious." (AL ANAM-36)

Social Justice: Social workers pursue social change, particularly with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people. Social workers' social change efforts are focused primarily on issues of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and other forms of social injustice. These activities seek to promote sensitivity to and knowledge about oppression and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers strive to ensure access to needed information, services, and resources; equality of opportunity; and meaningful participation in decision making for all people.

Men, we have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes that you might get to know one another. The noblest of you in Allah's sight is the most righteous of you. Allah is wise and all knowing (49:13). According to this verse of the Qur'an, the differences of color and race found among human

beings are for the purpose, not of discrimination, but of identification. Men in essence are equal. What really distinguishes one man from another is character.

The Right to Life: The first and the foremost basic right is the right to live and respect human life. The Holy Quran lays down: “Whosoever kills a human being without (any reason like) man slaughter, or corruption on earth, it is as though he had killed all mankind ...” (5:32).

“Do not kill a soul which Allah has made sacred except through the due process of law ...” (6:151)

Dignity and Worth of the Person: Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person. Social workers treat each person in a caring and respectful fashion, mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity.

Islam states that it is the responsibility of each individual to treat all of creation with respect, honors and dignity. The most deserving of respect is the creator himself. Respect begins with loving and obeying the commandments of God and from this respect flow all the manners and high standards of morality that are inherent in Islam. “And whosoever obeys God and his messenger, fears God, and keeps his duty (to him), such are the successful ones.” (Quran 24:52). Holy Quran clearly lays down: (a) “You who believe, do not let one (set of) people make fun of another set. (b) Do not defame one another. (c) Do not insult by using nicknames. (d) And do not backbite or speak ill of one another” (49:11-12).

Thus the Islam protect man’s honor and prohibit labeling, abusing the others or reputation of the others.

Human Relationships

Social work recognizes the central importance of human relationships. Social work strengthens relationships among people to promote, restore, maintain, and enhance the well-being of

individuals, families, social groups, organizations, and communities.

Islam places a premium on group living. All male female are expected to perform their prayers in congregation five times a day. Quran emphasizes on interpersonal tolerances “those who control their wrath and are forgiving towards mankind, Allah loves them” (3:134). It is also mentioned that “Help one another unto righteous and pious duty” (5:2). “O ye who believe! let not some men among you laugh at others: it may be that the (latter) are better than the (former): Nor let some women laugh at others: it may be that the (latter) are better than the (former): nor defame nor be sarcastic to each other nor call each other by (offensive) nicknames: Ill-seeming is a name connoting wickedness (to be used of one) after he has believed: And those who do not desist are (Indeed) doing wrong. “ (49:11).

The Quran says: “3.134 . Those who spend(of that which Allah hath given them) in ease and in adversity, those who control their wrath and are forgiving toward mankind ; Allah loves the good ;”. Islam wants its adherents to be just to every human being. “do not let your hatred of a people incite you to aggression “ (5:2). “and do not let ill-will towards any folk incite you so that you swerve from dealing justly. Be just ; that is nearest to heedfulness”(5:8).

Social Welfare

Social workers should promote the general welfare of society, from local to global levels, and the development of people, their communities, and their environments. Social workers should advocate for living conditions conducive to the fulfillment of basic human needs and should promote social, economic, political, and cultural values and institutions that are compatible with the realization of social justice. A basic principle that Islam teaches Muslim is to respect and honor the rights of others and to discharge their corresponding obligations (Khan: 2003)

Social workers should act to expand choice and opportunity for all people, with special regard for vulnerable, disadvantaged, oppressed, and exploited people and groups. Islam has specified rights of those in society who are needy and disadvantaged. They include widow, orphan, weak, poor, destitute and the downtrodden. Taking care of their need is considered to be highly virtues.

The discrimination against any person, group, or class based on race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, political belief, religion, or mental or physical disability, As Islam has prohibited these discriminations.

Current Issues and Islamic approach

Women: In terms of religious obligations, such as the Daily Prayers, Fasting, Poor-due, and Pilgrimage, woman is no different from man. In some cases indeed, woman has certain advantages over man. For example, the woman is exempted from the daily prayers and from fasting during her menstrual periods and forty days after childbirth. She is also exempted from fasting during her pregnancy and when she is nursing her baby if there is any threat to her health or her baby's. If the missed fasting is obligatory (during the month of Ramadan), she can make up for the missed days whenever she can. She does not have to make up for the prayers missed for any of the above reasons. Although women can and did go into the mosque during the days of the prophet and thereafter attendance at the Friday congregational prayers is optional for them while it is mandatory for men (on Friday).

The right of females to seek knowledge is not different from that of males. Prophet Muhammad said: "Seeking knowledge is mandatory for every Muslim" (Al Bayhaqi). Muslim as used here including both males and females.

Foeticide: Despite the social acceptance of female infanticide among some Arabian tribes, the Qur'an forbade this custom, and considered it a crime like any other murder.

“And when the female (infant) buried alive - is questioned, for what crime she was killed.” (Qur’an 81:8-9). Criticizing the attitudes of such parents who reject their female children, the Qur’an states: When news is brought to one of them, of (the Birth of) a female (child), his face darkens and he is filled with inward grief! With shame does he hide himself from his people because of the bad news he has had! Shall he retain her on (sufferance) and contempt, or bury her in the dust? Ah! What an evil (choice) they decide on? (Qur’an 16: 58-59).

Divorce: The Qur’an states about such cases: When you divorce women, and they reach their prescribed term, then retain them in kindness and retain them not for injury so that you transgress (the limits), (Qur’an 2:231).

Property: Islam decreed a right of which woman was deprived both before Islam and after it (even as late as this century), the right of independent ownership. According to Islamic Law, woman’s right to her money, real estate, or other properties is fully acknowledged. This right undergoes no change whether she is single or married. She retains her full rights to buy, sell, mortgage or lease any or all her properties. It is nowhere suggested in the Law that a woman is a minor simply because she is a female. It is also noteworthy that such right applies to her properties before marriage as well as to whatever she acquires thereafter.

Education: Men and Women have the right to seek education in Islam, “The pursuit of knowledge is incumbent on every Muslim, male or female,” a statement that has made the acquisition of at least rudimentary knowledge of religion and its duties mandatory for the Muslim individual, irrespective of gender. “The scholars are the heirs of the prophets” -Hadith. Believers also took to heart the Prophet’s counsel, “Seek knowledge even unto China,” which sacralized the journey, often perilous, undertaken to supplement and complete one’s education, an endeavor known in Arabic as *rihlat talab al-’ilm* (“journey in the search for knowledge”).

Cleanliness: In Islam, cleanliness and purification are not only usual requirements for the performance of worship, or when

embracing Islam, (a new Muslim takes a full body shower when embracing Islam) but are part of a Muslim's very faith. Allah (the Most High) says in the Quran (what is translated to mean): "Truly, Allah loves those who turn unto Him in repentance and loves those who purify themselves (by taking a bath and cleaning and washing thoroughly their private parts, bodies, for their prayers etc.); (Al Baqarah 2:222)

The Messenger of Allah said: Cleanliness is half of faith (Iman) and Alhamdulillah (Praise be to Allah) fills the scale, and SubhanAllah (Glory be to Allah) and Alhamdulillah (Praise be to Allah) fill up what is between the heavens and the earth, and prayer is a light, and charity is proof (of one's faith) and endurance is a brightness and the Qur'an is a proof on your behalf or against you. All men go out early in the morning and sell themselves, thereby setting themselves free or destroying themselves. (Sahih Muslim Book 2, Number 0432)

Family Planning: It is permissible to control the timing of births with the intent of distancing the occurrences of pregnancy or to delay it for a specific amount of time, if there is some Sharia need for that in the opinion of the spouses, based on mutual consultation and agreement between them. However, this is conditioned by that not leading to any harm, by it being done by means that are approved in the Shariat and that it does not do anything to oppose a current and existing pregnancy (Zarabozo).

However, many Ulema today oppose the termination of pregnancy. Whatever the case one cannot declare family planning as prohibited in Islam as it in no way amounts to killing a child. Even the termination of a pregnancy is allowed in order to properly plan the birth of a child according to one's financial resources. "Kill not your children for fear of want: we shall provide sustenance for them as well as for you: verily the killing of them is a great sin." (Al-Quran 17:31)

Parent Care: with all the complicated problems our modern societies face today, including that of an aging population, Islam offers an important social "safety net" for mercy and kindness

towards parents and the elderly, which is not related to state pensions or benefits to senior citizens. There is nothing like human care, love and compassion.

The Qur'an addresses this point in one touching verse: "And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him, and that you be kind to parents. If one or both of them attain old age during your life, say not to them a word of disrespect, nor repel them. However, address them in terms of honor, and lower to them the wing of humility, out of mercy, and say, 'My Lord! Bestow on them Your Mercy, as they did bring me up when I was young'" (Qur'an 17:23-24).

Mohammad once said that cursing parents is one of the greatest of sins, as it shows pride and ingratitude to those who deserve the greatest respect. It is forbidden for Muslims to ridicule, abuse, or insult a person or persons family members, even as a joke. Islam has given highest priorities to the parents. After belief in God, one the love and care for parents. "Paradise is at the feet of the mother."

The Qur'an elevates kindness to parents (especially mothers) to a status second only to the worship of Allah. Your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him and that you be kind to parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of contempt nor repel them, but address them in terms of honor. (Qur'an 17:23)

And We have enjoined on every human being (to be good) to his/her parents: in travail upon travail did his/her mother bear him/her and in years twain was his/her weaning: (hear the command) "Show gratitude to me and to your parents: to Me is (your final) destiny." (Qur'an 31:14)

Discrimination: In Islam, all men are equal, regardless of color, language, race, or nationality. It addresses itself to the conscience of humanity and banishes all false barriers of race, status, and wealth. There can be no denying the fact that such barriers have always existed and continue to exist today in the so-called

enlightened age. Islam removes all of these impediments and proclaims the ideal of the whole of humanity being one family of Allah.

Islam is international in its outlook and approach and does not admit barriers and distinctions based on color, clan, blood, or territory, as was the case before the advent of Muhammad. Unfortunately, these prejudices remain rampant in different forms even in this modern age. Islam wants to unite the entire human race under one banner. To a world torn by national rivalries and feuds, it presents a message of life and hope and of a glorious future. Islam makes no discrimination on the basis of race, country, colour, language or the like. Its appeal is to the whole of humanity.

What Is Forbidden in Islam?

Islam has strictly forbidden the telling of a lie in any shape or form, for lies sully the liar, harm other people and become a source of menace to society. It has totally forbidden theft, bribery, forgery, cheating, the levying of interest and usury, for whatever man gains by these means is obtained by causing loss and injury to others. Backbiting tale telling and slander have been forbidden. Gambling, lottery, speculation and all games of chance have been prohibited, for in all of them one-person gains at the expense of thousands of losers (2:219).

All those forms of exploitative commerce have been prohibited in which one party alone is to be the loser. Monopoly, hoarding, black marketing, holding of land from cultivation and all other forms of individual and social aggrandizement have been prohibited. Murder, blood spilling and spreading of mischief, disorder and destruction have been made crimes, for no one has a right to take away the life or property of other people merely for his personal gain or gratification.

Adultery, fornication and unnatural sexual indulgence have been strictly prohibited for they not only vitiate the morality and impair the health of the perpetrator but also spread corruption

and immorality in society, cause venereal disease, damage both public health and the morals of the coming generations, upset relations between man and man and split the very fabric of the cultural and social structure of the community.

It bids believers to respect others' feelings, to avoid indecent and abusive language, to help each other, to attend to the sick, to support the destitute, to assist the needy and the crippled, to sympathize with the trouble-stricken, to look after orphans and widows, to feed the hungry, to clothe the under-clad and to help the unemployed in seeking employment.

Field Level Cultural Competencies/Strategies

The social worker and students placed in Muslim community for field work has identified following difficulties and required skills while working with Muslim communities: - the social workers should be familiar with the basic beliefs, values, and rituals of Islam as the client practices it and competent to integrate into helping process. As the impact of religious values is seen on the life of Muslim communities.

Language is the main barriers for non-Muslim workers, if the families are using pure Urdu, it is difficult to communicate. On the other hand, the Muslim families in urban area especially women are less familiar with other than Urdu language. This is seen in the old city and families following '*pardhah*' system while the economically weaker sections (working class) are familiar with the local language.

An interaction with Muslim women is difficult to male. The women hesitate to talk with new person, whereas a female worker gets better response from Muslim women in comparison to male practitioners. While interacting with women '*Baji*', '*Appa*' (sister) words are more preferable, while '*Bhaijan*' '*Bhai Sahab*' (Brother) indicates 'we feeling'. Our few of the students use to "Salam" to male female has constructed close association with clients. It is

also found that a non-Muslim while quoting references with client it is more effective and client responds positively.

For community participation, Imam (Islamic clergymen) of mosques is the best resources, a Imam is having respect in that community; for participating in any programmes, he can easily disseminate the messages. If the problem is having cultural affiliation, the assistance of imam or Maulana (religious preacher) is essential.

Worker should be familiar with few of the etiquettes and manners such as entering in the house with prior permissions, speaking politely with women by keeping lower gaze and avoiding eye contacts. While conducting programmes, the time of Namaz should be kept in mind. Mostly, the programmes should be organised on Friday, before or after Namaz, the preference is given to after Namaz. In the community, during the month of Ramadan, *Eiftar* party is arranged for the Muslims those who are fasting.

Iztema is a religious gathering of male or females. A separate Iztema are arranged for male and female. In this Iztema, the religious preacher preaches the teaching of Islam. Issue base such Iztema are organised in the community. To promote the education among the parents, a preach on Islam and education can be arranged.

Conclusion

Cultural competency is essential for practicing social work with a community. It is the totality of ideas, beliefs, values, knowledge which community possess. The integration in social work methods and values in action in community are essential factor for effective social work practice. The people, in which community live and believes in religion or creed having great influence on their approach and behaviours. The familiarity of social workers with theses tenants of community are positive for result-oriented work.

Practicing social work with Muslim community, the practitioners must familiar with the Islamic worldview. Quran and Hadith are the main sources for understanding Islam. Quran is the holy book of Islam while Hadith provides guidance for Muslims on issues. In addition, sharia is rules and guidelines for day-to-day life of Muslim. All Muslims are expected to follow five pillars of faith, which includes Iman, Namaz/Salat (pray), Zakat, Fasting and Hajj.

There are close similarities between teachings of Islam and core social work values such as respect individual's dignity and worth, human relations, concept of social justice, helping to needy etc. Besides this while practicing social work with Muslim communities, few of the issues with Islamic perspectives have been described in the light of Quran and Hadith. Quran, Hadith and sharia has provided solutions and guidelines on current issues such as Foeticide, property, cleanliness, family planning, property, parental care, discriminations etc. these current issues need intervention of social work with appropriate and relevant guidelines of Islam while working with Muslim communities. To increase cultural competencies and searching the solution" in cultural context, the practitioner may use Muslim preacher, as source.

To conclude, only theoretical cultural competency is not enough for social work practitioners. The practitioners have to find out the strategies to intervene in the community and get support or participation of Muslim is essence for practice. The local language, customs, religious beliefs, community's approach etc are prime considerations in the cultural based social work with Muslims. One must understand their religious culture and integrate into helping process.

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Religion and Social Work: Contribution of Veershaiva in Constructing a Theory of Social Work

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Social work and human history go together. So Social Work was always in human society although it beings to be a defined pursuit and profession in the 19th Century. Professional social workers work with individuals, groups, families, organization and communities. While working with the social workers should concern with their social problems, their causes and solutions. At the same time they should concern about the culture of the community, their customs, traditions and religious beliefs, values and ethics. Because each religion and culture have their own techniques or sources to solve their problems. India has had a glorious tradition of spirituality and religion. As each religion teaches us the philosophy of humanity as Daya, Karuna, Ahimsa, Equality, human rights and social justice, dignity of individual. In the 12th century there was no dignity to man and manual work in Karnataka. Basweshwara of Veershaiva spiritual religion finds out some solutions. To abolish social evils which has created injustice in the society. Intervention sources of Veershaiva religion to solve the social problems were very effective. Bashweshwara not only preached these to people but actually practiced them to attain social justice. His main aim was to up bring the common man in society. So Bashweshwara was called as the man of masses.

In this paper researcher intended to press the similarities between Veershaiva religion and social work, values which are helpful in social work theory building to solve the problems of the people and social issues focused by Veershaiva and the intervention sources available in the Veershaiva religion practiced by Bashweshwara a great social reformer, a philosopher and spiritual leader of Veershaiva religion. he was not a founder of a Veershaiva religion but he and his coworkers reconstructed the religion by contributing the ideas like 'Kayaka' (Dignity to Man & Manual Work) 'Anubhavamantapa' (A Spiritual Parliament) 'Isthalinga' (Universal Symbol of God), 'Vachanas' (Rational & Progressive thoughts in the form of Poem) which has created literary revolution. As Veershaiva religion developed its own culture which implies harmonious relationship between an individual and his society.

This religion have spiritual base which is based on the doctoring of 'Kayakve Kailasa' means work is haven and by this it was tried to attain dignity of man and manual work. And thus attain principal of 'Dignity of Man' which is also a principal of social work.

Important principals used by Veershaiva Sharna's (Devotee) in society to up bring the downtrodden, to eradicate the social evils in the society, which were exploited the common man and thereby became obstacles in the path of equal and just society.

Bashweshwara was born in Bagewadi in Bijapur district in Karnataka. In the 12th century (1134 A. D.). He left Bagewadi and spent 12 years studding Sangameshwara the Shaivite school of learning Kudala Sangama. There he conversed with scholars and developed his spiritual and religious views in association with his social understanding. At that time Baswa observed that there were numerous superstitious beliefs in the society. People were discriminate on the bases of their casts, sex, women were having secondary positions they were not treated equally and kept far away from all their rights as human beings. There is no dignity to man as their occupations were based on cast, and that occupations

were having no status in society. They were considered the work of low dignity. The position of untouchable was pitiable. The society needed social justice, human rights, dignity to man and manual work, equality. The need was to reconstruct the society which was based on all above mentioned humanitarian values.

From this background Bashwara and other Sharna's (devotee) had reconstructed the Veershaiva religion having spiritual base and humanitarian values.

1. Veershaiva Religion

'Vira generally means a hero. Veershaiva insisted its follower should develop single minded devotion, one god shiva. This did not, however, mean that they should show this respect to other gods. To them Shiva is Supreme. The term 'Vira' also suggested the zeal with which the new movement was propagated. The term lingayat are lingavanta is also used to describe this religion. lingayats are those who wear linga on their body. They are forbidden to go to the temple and Worship the shivlinga there.

Condemning other religions and upholding one's own was a commonly accepted a practice at that time. Bhasawa has severely condemned the evil aspects of other religions in his Vachanas. Veershaivasim declares that anybody could become Veershaiva irrespective of his class, community, Creed or occupation. Once one becomes a Veershaiva, one would be treated as an equal. Veershaivaism asked two things of an individual, firstly, he should sever his connections with his former religion by wearing Ishtalinga on his body, secondly he should have complete faith in god Shiva.

2. The Main Principals of Veershaivaism

- Veershaiva should apply Bhasma or holy ashes on the forehead.
- One should give up meat eating and wine drinking.

- One should become perfect vegetarian.
- He should always speak truth and avoid stealing and killing.
- One should be not be greedy
- One should not be lazy.
- The person should take a profession and work hard for his living.
- One should avoid go to temple because the body itself is the temple where Shiva live.
- If a person lacks time or resources to perform worship, that should not worry him, for what is of real importance is the faith he has in god.

All this appealed to the masses, especially to the poor and downtrodden. They felt that a redeemer had appeared for their upliftment. Thousands of people came and embraced the religion. Among these agriculturists, weavers, shoe-makers, fishermen, hunters, basket makers, merchants and then Brahmins.

New Ideas contributed by Basवेश्वरा and his Co-workers to eradicate social evils in the society. May be summed up in terms of the following:

a. Anubhav Mantap

It was a spiritual parliament established by Basva & his coworkers. It was not a building having four walls & pillars, neither it was neither a temple nor a place of worship, Puja or Prarthana. But it was a place where people belonging to all cast, sex, occupation & class were participating in not only spiritual discrimination. The main characteristics of 'Anubhav Mantapa' was to share the experiences of the society, classification, purification and thus make them values and principle not only to preach but to practice. Sharna's (devotee) started for implement the values and principles which were discussed in Anubhav Mantapa by themselves and then people in the society started to

practice them. The values and principles were practiced by involving all the common people in discussions. The discussions held in Anubhav Mantapa were in the form of Vachanas progressing thoughts written by various sharna's the people participated in the discussions were from king & queen of Kashmir to Kaktiaya, channya and Sankavva (Prostitute women). There was no any discrimination on the basis of caste, relation, sex and class and accepted everyone as equal.

Jedar Dasimayya was by profession a weaver, Shankar Dasimayya a tailor, Madival Machayya a washerman, Myadar Ketayya a basket-maker, Kinnari Bommayya a gold smith, Vakkalmnddayya, a farmer, Hadapada Appanna a barber, Jedar Madanna a soldier, Ganda Kannappa an oilman, Dohar Kakkyya a farmer, Mudar Channa a cobbler and Ambigar chandeyya a ferryman. There were women followers such as Satyakka, Rammavve, Sommayve, Sole Sannkka, Lakkammes, Muktyyakka, Akkamahadevi, with their respective vacations.

One curious thing was that all these and many more have sung the Vachana's (saying) regarding their vacations in a very suggestive imaginary.

In this Anubhav Mantapa Sharna's realized the importance of peaceful life as some people in the society were leading were pitiable life due to discrimination, injustice, inequality, exploitation. All such people were invited in this Anubhav Mantapa to share their Anubhava's, experiences and to find out solutions to their problems with common discussions. Common people felt very happy by getting humanitarian treat meant in that place and realized the importance of Ishtalinga, Kayaka & lead a happy life.

This was the revolutionary step taken by the Veershaiva Sharna's in 12th century that Anubhav Mantapa was not only a platform for people belonging to all casts, class, occupation but it was a unique example in the world at that time (up to my knowledge) which give equal status to women of all caste, class and occupations (like prostitution) and allowed them to participate in spiritual, social and economic discussion. This was revolutionary

idea given by Veershaiva's which is relevant in present day for social workers to create all healthy society without any discrimination. This was a unique example of women empowerment, weapon for discrimination, equality, human rights and social justice.

b. Vachanas

They are progressive revolutionary thoughts of 12th century Sharna's. a literacy revolution was created through Vachanas. Sharna's spread social awareness through their poetry known as Vachana's. these are rational and progressive social thoughts.

Basva, Akkamahadal, Allamprabhu, Channabasveshwara, Sidharma all these & other Sharnas did not preach people the intricate aspects of spirituality, but they taught people how to live happily in a rational social order. Later come to be known as Sharna movement in which Vachanas were used effectively to stop the social evils existed during that time.

Vachanas (revolutionary thoughts) had their roots deep in the accumulated popular discontentment regarding the existing social and religious conditions. It is no wonder that the mafonity of people who accepted and acted upon these teaching come from the poorer sections of the society. Later number of people throughout the country joined him who belongs to different cast, sex and religion, occupations.

Vachanas were the reflections of the society and they created awareness among the people on the issues like, inter-caste marriage, untouchability, equality, equal status of women, social justice, value of life importance, self purification.

Bashweshwara Vachanas were simple and appealing his Vachanas preaches the principles in simple way. He says religion is a way of life.

One of his Vachanas

Thou shall not steal,nor kill,
Nor speak a lie,
Be angry with no one,
Nor scorn another man,
Nor glory in thyself,
Nor others hold to blame.
This is your inward purity,
This is your outward purity,
This is the way to win our Lord.
Kudala Sangama (Basavanna-page 46)
What sort of religion can it be
Without compassion.
Compassion needs must be
Towards all living things,
Compassion is the root
Of all religious faith,
Lord Kundala Sangama does not care
For what is not like this. (Basavanna-page 40)

Bashveshwara declared that religion is a way of life. Its essence consisted in livings a life of goodness and sincerity. He defined the term 'goodlife' in his Vachanas and said that good life was share way to god. The poor must have been really thrilled to hear that they too could belong to a religion as others did (Basavanna-page 47).

Sharnas in their Vachanas denounced meaningless rituals and taught instead simple and sensible 'Acharas' or practices conducive to clean and good life. Channabasava had listed such Acharas, these include taking regular baths, brushing teeths, abstaining from violence, speaking truth, being faithful (to ones husband or wife), etc. Veershaivaism laid self on inner purity; it did not deny the importance of external purity as well.

Devar Dasimayya another Sharna has compared man and women to two stick one placed above the other, both are necessary for making fine. He searched a girl of his liking and married her.

He had said that Shiva loves the devotion of a couple, who lead a life of harmony and understanding (which is relevant in these days in couple counseling).

Basva & others learnt from Dalimayya and made the emancipation of women one of the mottoes of their movement. Women were encouraged to pursue various occupations and earn for their families. They were also encouraged to take up spiritual practices as men did and they were also encouraged themselves through song and poetry. As a result, we find among the mystic saints of century, at least thirty two women who composed Vachana's among them. Basvana's two wives, Basavana's elder sister, Ammavve a common woman who spun yarn, pittavve a seller of pancakes, Sommovve a thrasher also composed Vachanas. There were other women who took up different occupations like visiting each house before dawn and taken up the Kayaka of reciting the Vachanas in public. So many women at that time took to religious practices along with their husbands. They sometime advised their husbands on religious matters. Many of them were well read and participated in religious discussion that took place at Anubhav Mantap or some time at 'Mahamane' (Basavas house). An atmosphere was created for women to realize their potentialities and participate in social activities. It was a revolutionary change, it is doubtful that some number of women writers was there in any other Indian language. Women enjoyed equality & liberty at that time which led them to live a life as human beings. (Which really needs today on the part of so many women who exploited, abused, burned, faced domestic violence etc)

In this way the Vachana's brought in new ideas and the common man was made aware of my own rights. The man aim was when the masses became conscious of the injustice done to them; the men in power, political and religious get perturbed.

c. Dasoha

Dasoha was another important contribution of Veershaivism. Dasoha means the more earning from Kayaka (hard work) which

will be distributed among the needy in the societies. More earning means (more than the need of a person) Dasoha oppose the savings, due to this it was helpful in preventing unemployment. Everybody was engaged in their Kayaka for earning and giving excess to the needy. By supporting 'Dasoha'- social welfare was achieved by preventing, unemployment in the society and all getting their basic needs.

d. Kayaka

Kayaka ve Kailasa was another contribution of Bashveshwara a social reformer of Veershaiva religion. Kayaka literally means anything connected with the body (Kaya)..It is physical extension or any occupation which an individual takes up. According to Basva and others, every individual should take up some job of his choice and perform it with all sincerity. No individual should be a burden to society. Nuliya Chandayya said that exploitation of any kind was wholly unacceptable to god. Hence Kayaka implied hard work, physical or mental. Basava served as a treasurer under king Bijjala and that was by Kayaka.

Allamma said "we should realize god through the work we do" the person who took up a particular job should do it with sincerity and should share a part of his earnings for the needy and Jangamas (guru). Kayaka also implies that no occupation is inferior or superior to another. All were of equal status and people who did their jobs well were entitled to respect. Basveshwara said that Kayaka (Sharna) (is Naivedya (good) and work is heaven. Hard work is god performing Kayaka with devotion is acting of heaven. Due to this concept Bashveshwara was called as Kayaka Bhanderi, Kayak Purush, Kayak Gogi.

He proclaimed that all members of the state are labourers, some may be intellectual labourers and others may be manual labourers. He placed practice before precept and his own life was of rigid rectitude. Basva brought home to his countrymen. The lesson of self-purification. He tried to raise the moral levels of the public life in the country and he insisted that the same rules of conduct

applied to the administrators as to the individual members of the society. He also taught the dignity of manual labour by insisting on work as worship. Every kind of manual labour, which was looked down upon by people of high cast, showed be looked upon with love and reverence, he argued. Thus arts and crafts flourished and a new foundation was laid down in the history of the economics of the land.

Many of the Sharna and Sharnis gave more importance to Kayaka as Ayadakki lakmma says in her Vachana:

He who involving in Kayaka, he has no need of Guru Sanidhya
Neither he needs Lingpuja, nor any other thought except
Kayaka. Because Kayakave Kailasa (There is no heaven except
Kayaka).

Somadevi, another Sharnis, says:

There is no food without Kayaka
The house neighbor without Kayaka is like hell

e. Isthalinga

Basvanna used Isthalinga to eradicate untouchability, establish equality among all human beings and a means to attain spiritual enlistment. Isthalinga is very much different from stharlinga and charlinga Ishtalinga is a universal symbol of God.

To Basva, the temple represented institutionalism of the rich and the bigoted. He and his colleagues categorically stated that no Veershaiva should build a temple, nor should he enter a temple and offer worship god, in the form of an Isthaling, was on one's own body, and he resided in one's heart in his true form. Basva knew that such a move, though impracticable, was necessary for the orthodox people were not prepared to admit the untouchables in to the temples. Basva had neither the resources nor the desire to build temples. (Basavanna page 51-52).

This was an important concept used by Sharnas to eradicate untouchability in the society.

3. Application to Social Work

As social work grew out of humanitarian and democratic ideas and its values are based on receipt for the equality and dignity of all people. It focuses on meeting human needs and developing human potentials, human rights and social justice. In concern with this all these values and principles were focused in Veershaiva religion. While working with the people Basveshwara and his coworkers used the sources of intervention of Veershaiva religion.

Sharna's (Devotees) movement was for the common man and not for the scholars and the sophisticated. Vachanas are the important sources for social awareness used by the Sharnas. In present days it can also be used as the efficient technique for aware her of the people to get their rights as human beings, not discriminative on any ground social workers while working with people must know the meaning of the Vachanas. These will be used in proper situation in a proper way. Thus will be effective in solving the problems. The same time he should know the meaning of Kayaka.

It is not only needed to know the ideas like Kayaka but implement them in proper way is the need of the day. Its implementation helps the society to realize the importance of 'Kayak Dasoha' which tells us that the person who took up a particular job should do it with sincerity and should share a part of his earnings with the Jangamas and the needy. Today's people are waiting for welfare schemes by the Government and most of them sit idle by not doing work. Thus unemployment increases, people want more money with in short time by short cut, but implementation of Kayaka will prevent all these will make the people do work sincerely and help them to understand that work is worship and by this help to self and society's welfare.

Anubhav Mantapa is needed today to abolish discrimination on all grounds. Anubhav Mantapa of 12th century was unique feature of the movement which has contributed lot for upbringing the downtrodden and to create a just equal society. Today social

workers can practice model of Anubhav can pay in the communities which will be based on the doctrine of equality. Really it will be very effective source to bring equality in the community. Today's community halls can be used for this purpose.

Basveshwara was a man of masses. He was loved by the people not only for his preaching but he practiced the preaching himself first and then told the people. He was a man of action according to his saying (nudidante nadedare ide Janme Kade) i. e. One who acts according to his words reaches salvation. the main aim of Veershaivism was to eliminate the barriers of caste and to move untouchability. Raising the untouchability to equal the highborn. As Basveshwara says man should not be considered by his birth, but by his conduct. The acquired sanctity of family religions and the improvement in the status of womanhood. He tried to reduce the importance of rites and rituals, fasts and pilgrimages in present days. Number of women becomes anemic due to frequent fasts. So the above mentioned values of Veershaivism are helpful to the social workers to prevent such problems in the society.

By implementing values and principles propagated by Veershaivas will be helpful to raise the relation generally to higher level capacity both in thought and achieve.

Professional social workers must know two important Vachana of Basveshwara:

Don't ask who is he, who is he
Who is he, but say he is our's
He is our's he is our's

Again Basva says man can't become high caste by his birth but by his conduct and to support this he says-

How can I call siriyala as a Shetty,
How can I call Channaya as Madar,
How can I call Kayakayya as Dohar,
If I myself am called Brahmin
How can Kundala Sangama
Like me?

Conclusion

This religion believes in principle of equality, social justice, and improving status of women and thus to create happy society of common man. Some are also the principles of professional social work.

So the social worker can justify the principles by practicing them in the communities to solve the problems of common man.

Many thinkers and politicians of today in India have appreciated the work of Basveshwara as revolutionary social worker and they are in favour of applying these principles in today's situations to create an ideal society.

Mahatma Gandhi spoke thus at the Belgaum session of the Indian National Congress in 1924. "It has not been possible for me to practice all the precepts of Basveshwara which he taught 800 years ago and which he also practiced eradication of untouchability and promotion of dignity of labour where among his core precepts. One does not find even shades of casteism in him. Had he lived during our times he would have been a saint worthy of worship."

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Religion, Spirituality and Social Work Engagement

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Religion, Spirituality and Social Work are independent concepts, however these terms are closely interconnected. The word religion has its etymological roots in its Latin term *religare* which means “to bind, to tie or to re-connect”. The Latin word *religio* was originally used to mean only “reverence for God or the gods, careful pondering of divine things”. It is difficult to define the word religion. There are differencing opinions among scholars as it encompasses the boundaries of the term *culture*. The common man’s understanding of religion revolves around the belief in the existence of God as supernatural power, sanctioned moral codes, respect for sacred or reverence for God. Religion is an articulated way of social life, a common way of living, believing and organising with definite commonalities. Gellman and Hartman summarised that a religion is a belief in divine (superhuman or spiritual) being(s) and the practice (rituals) and the moral codes (ethics) that result from that belief. Belief gives religion its mind, rituals give religion its shape, and ethics give religion its heart. The religion by nature is social formation which creates strict adherence in relation to others through the element of fear, guilt, rejection, punishment, repercussions, reprimanding, and causal effects with elements of negatives. Consequent upon this, religion has created more *God fearing* in place of *God loving* persons. In the process of following and practicing religion, it has brought

the element of people controlling other people, instilling morality, forcing adherence of rituals and ethics and perpetuates institutionalisation. The various deformities and ills encountered by the institution of religion today are in itself by product of organised, structured, institutionalised forms of religion. A few religions born to break this vicious cycle but these religions also become prey to its own cycle. The Our many cotemporary social problems like communal violence, terrorism, tattered group relations can be traced created by hard core Hindutava to Islamic Jehadi to Sikh khadkus are not mere reflections.

Contrary to religion, spirituality is more personal way of relating with the sacred or divine. It is inward looking in comparison to religion which is more outward looking with relation to others. Spirituality has its roots in religion but it is quite different than religion. Spirituality has been described as a universal phenomenon (W. Teasdale and & Dalai Lama, 1999). It is an awareness about life, its meaning and purpose which may or may not be developed out of the religious belief, conduct or practices. Cashwell, Bentley and Bigbee (2007) have defined spirituality as a developmental process that is both active and passive wherein beliefs, disciplined practice, and experiences are grounded and integrated to result in increased *mindfulness* (non-judgmental awareness of present experience), *heartfulness* (experience of compassion and love) and *soulfulness* (Connections beyond ourselves, Cashwell, Benley & Bigbee 2007). In simple sense, spirituality means process of discovering meaning and purpose of own life. In the path of spirituality, person dissolves its ego, develops understanding of the true *self*, and becomes more genuine, authentic, real, and complete. The ego is always relational as it exist in relation to others and therefore it creates more confusions, irritants, problems, obstacles in relating himself or herself with others. The *others* may be person(s), group(s), community (ies), system(s), an institution(s), the universe or even god.

Religion and spirituality are two different terms and often considered synonymous to each other. However, both terms have some commonalities, close interaction and overlaps. There are commonalities in their purpose, qualities and value frames. The religions are highlighted by core values philanthropy, altruistic motives, compassion, selfless services and spirituality inculcates the same values. Spirituality is highlighted by qualities such as kindness, compassion, tolerance, caring service, welfare, concerns for others and, so does religion in its real sense. All religions give themselves expression through symbols, rituals, prayers, practices, behaviours, language, sacred text, literature, scriptures, disciplinary routines even restrictions full of do's and don'ts (including dietary) extend helping hand to people during their journey to explore spirituality. It is often argued that religion is an organised spirituality whereas spirituality is a personalised religion. Different people have analysed this statement differently. Religion is organised spirituality in the sense that it thrives upon as collectivise individual actions to attain the same value base as goal whereas spirituality is personalised religion followed and practiced by different individuals differently in more personalised manner in different ways in different forms of their choice. Religion is an external aspect whereas spirituality is an internal process. The primary concern of the institution of religion is worldly, related to supreme power, exterior in character and social by nature whereas spirituality is an individual centric process which begins internally and may grow outwardly during its experiential growth. It may connect one from internal to the external environment, unknown to known, invisible to visible in its process outcomes. Religion can exist away from individuals but spirituality cannot as it is essentially oneself to others.

Religion has been described as a social institution for social control; therefore it has enjoyed power in all societies in one or other ways. Its controlling mechanism has crossed boundaries and when rulers or political masters have realised the power of religion, they misused or abused the institution of religion for their own ends. The people those who are going into the politics of

religion they have forgotten the religion of the politics. The politics by origin was meant to serve the societal ends not personal so was the case with religion. In today's politics, the religion has strong visible role and its convoluted manifestations appears in contradictory forms of religious values – hate, dissension, hostility, violence, bloodshed, war and so on. It is saddened to note that an institution has reversed its avowed role and defeated its very purpose in present context. That is why, the concept of spirituality is gaining more and more importance and is now talked everywhere from schools to colleges to universities to corporate to governments to UN system and is also gaining currency in market driven economy. Self-awareness programmes, yoga, meditation, vipasana, self-transcendence and various other forms of self-discovery and exploration are now-a-days most popular terminologies and pedagogies for combating growing individual and social problems on one hand and experiencing growth and development on other..

In the beginning of the 20th century, two disciplines started taking shape - social work and management - and later on grew as human service profession. Having its roots in scientific charity, the growing social problems like industrialisation, immigrations, urbanisation poverty, labour unrest provided fertile ground for the development and expansion of state responsibility for demand of effective professional services. Social work passed through four stages namely charity, welfare, development and empowerment and shaped the mission and vision of social work profession. Since the professional social work grew out of humanitarian and democratic ideals, its values revolved around worth and dignity of people with equality and social justice as its main pillars. The International Federation of social Workers and international association of Schools of Social work defined social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments. Principles of human rights and

social justice are fundamental to social work.¹ Since its inception, social work has focused its efforts on responding human needs and developing their potentials so that they may take the charge of their own problems. It always intended for preventing dysfunction, solving problems at individual, group and community level, improving their conditions and enriching the life of disadvantaged population. The problem solving and developing capacities became its main agenda with changes at all possible levels. In order to achieve its goals, social work employed varied forms of skills, techniques, methods, pedagogies including case work , counselling, psycho support, group work, community action, family therapies etc.

The practice of social work is about the interface of people with their families and their communities. Social workers are agents of social control but they also promote social welfare and social change to empower the individual, the group and the community. As a result, they regularly work with the disadvantaged, disenfranchised and oppressed population (Armitage, 1996 quoted in Csiernik, Furge & Rishchynshi, 2006: 12). The present society is witnessing a second great societal transformation as it is in the transition from industrial society to information society. This transformation has widened the gaps between people, groups in terms of availability, access and affordability of new technology among already marginalized groups and communities. The mad race under the cover of competition and performance has drained the values and ethics of individuals, groups and people. Consequently, there are more inter personal and intra personal problems in addition to changing socio political and economic environment. The common man is trapped in the complex spider- web of raucous growth of consumer society and losing its peace, quietude, tranquillity. The need, greed, anger, resentment, frustration, rage, ferocity, violence, stress etc are increasing at such fast speed to spur disenchantment with personal and social life to the extent of world-weariness, thus questioning even the civilized character of human beings and society. The other side of the coin depicts that the relationship between man and

nature is weakening and the space is also shrinking. To respond back, the necessary tools are either missing or incomplete to offer permanent solutions. These facts necessitate that human service professions should adopt a critical appraisal of the implications of the available mechanisms and practice tools. Spirituality seems to offer those new mechanisms and tools required by the society with accessibility and affordability.

Looking at spirituality as the mechanism and tools of problem solving in present scenario, the need is to understand spirituality in practice sense. Thus, it requires considering misconceptions and prejudices. Spirituality practice is commonly misunderstood with religious practices. All religious persons need not to be necessarily spiritual and all spiritual persons need not to be religious. Spirituality has nothing to do with age, caste, gender as it can be practiced by anyone at any age. It has no boundaries. The person need not to belong a particular religion or caste as precondition in practicing spirituality. If spirituality is considered as education or pedagogy to understand self, or as therapy, it can be enjoyed by all without any restrictions or boundaries. Spirituality is free from all kinds of *ism* and it is in true sense completely secular in character. Spirituality has no settled foundation (Pandikattu 2012). Raising questions, finding some answers and then, asking more questions are basic human traits. Essentially, humans are questioning animals. "Question has answer in its word itself, it means quest is on. Through spirituality, one can find answers of his/her problems as Quest is within us." The fundamental difficulty with human beings is that they take the easy way out, accept other's answers and live our lives according to them. Even our social institutions like religious or educational system do not answer the more serious and fundamental questions on life, its goal and meaning as majority of people are either don not raise questions or are satisfied with the simplistic solutions and persist with those answers, even when the questions have changed.

There is need to revisit our education system and educational pedagogies. Spirituality should be brought as part of practicing skills in the education. There is more need to include the same in syllabi of Social work courses. Many experiments are going on in the field of social welfare and development and one such experiment by a voluntary organisation named Social Orientation to Human Aspirations through Meditation (SOHAM) is worth mentioning. This experiment is an attempt to raise orphan traumatic children through meditation and claims to provide better possibilities of development of children and reducing their trauma of being neglected through simple practice of meditation. This is the right time to define and redefine the terms, reinstitute the same. Social work profession need to re look at their own life seriously as social work is not only for others but for the own self also. Social work is not a subject but an experience with our and other life, therefore human service professionals require for deep reflection, questioning before moving on for helping others or in the process of extending services.

Notes

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