

In India lockdown was announced in the last week of March 2020 and Social Workers had many challenges starting from managing self and family to retaining their position in their organization. In India, the state borders were closed down and in Tamilnadu, my state, district borders were closed and in few districts, the village borders were closed. People in cities and towns were permitted to move within 2 kilometers only, to buy essentials.

Prevention was the major goal of the Government and there were meticulous planning and implementation. Personnel from Police and the Health Department alone were in the field. Their hard work needs to be appreciated. Majority of the Government Social Welfare Officers, Social Work Practitioners in Government and the Non-Government Organisations, Social Work Educators were at home and they had very few roles to play. I would say that in India still, we struggle to make Social Work a Professional Education. It is like any other Arts and Science Course. This is reality. There is no licensing of Professional Social Workers. Unity in objectives and Collaboration between the different Associations is required to attain this.

In a personal capacity, very few Social Workers were involved as think tanks and were part of the planning team set by the state and Central Government. There were very good plans but mostly focussing on the middle class and the high class. The plight of the migrant laborers, homeless, daily wage laborers, and the poorest of the poor was unseen as there was hardly any member in the planning team to voice out for these sections, or we don't know if the voice of Social Workers was heard and not given priority.

Very few Social Work Schools and Health institutions in cities were into Tele Counselling and preparation of ICT materials, for example, Loyola College Chennai and NIMHANS Bangalore.

In Tamilnadu, Social Workers who wanted to reach out to the needy either had to be with the ruling party or the opposition, this actually put us into the ethical dilemma creating an obstacle to render services to the needy. Many Social Workers were involved in online learning, online teaching, webinars, and conferences.

The District Administration and Local Administration teams were given power so that they could keep an eye on every citizen. From 5th May a few rules were relaxed and from last Saturday we Social Workers are able to deliver services to the needy, I should say "without fear".

I would conclude by saying that every Social Workers' experience would be unique in Tamilnadu or South India. There were no systematic or coordinated efforts from Professional Social Workers at a National, State, or District level. There is the fear instilled in Social Workers they need to come out of it to share their experiences, participate in surveys, or send articles. I think, we have to create a platform that would build confidence in them, and also attract them to share their experiences. How do we make it interesting? Let us come up with ideas.

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