Organised by Samtse College of Education in partnership with unicef Bhutan

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PROCEEDING OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON EMERGING SOCIAL WORK PRACTICES AND EDUCATION

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Preface by the President

The International Conference on "Emerging Social Work Practices and Education: Dialogues on New Dimensions in Social Work Practices" was the first ever international conference organised on social work practices and education in Bhutan. The conference was organised jointly by Samtse College of Education and UNICEF Bhutan Office from May 2nd to 4th 2019 coinciding with the birth anniversary of our beloved Late His Majesty Our Third Druk Gyalpo Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, the founding father of Samtse College of Education.

The Opening Ceremony of the conference was graced by His Excellency Dr. Lotey Tshering, the Honorable Prime Minister of Bhutan, who gave the keynote opening address. The conference participants included social work academics, teacher educators, school teachers, social work practitioners, researchers, social work students, pre-service teachers, and a range of professionals from civil society organisations and international development agencies in Bhutan and other countries outside Bhutan such as the United States of America, Australia, South Africa, Japan and India.

The primary objective of this intellectual meet was to provide a platform for social work academia, practitioners and scholars to engage in generative dialogues and knowledge exchange to promote sharing of good practices and experiences of social work practices and education. All the papers published in this conference proceedings were accepted for publication based on the interest of authors who presented these papers during the conference. The papers published have been reviewed by social work academics and scholars who have rich experience of teaching and working in the field of social work practices and education, in addition to extensive experience of engaging in active research and scholarly works in social work practices and education.

Samtse College of Education hopes that the selected papers published in this conference proceeding serve as additional academic resources to promote knowledge exchange and scholarly engagement of academics and professionals in social work practices and education.

With warmest wishes.

Rinchen Dorji, PhD
President

Acknowledgements

- Key note speakers Professor Vishanthie Sewpaul, Professor Tatsuru Akimoto, Professor Cathy Humphreys, and Professor Vicki Banham for being the keynote speakers of the conference.

- Guests and participants from UNICEF Regional Offices, Thimphu such as NCWC, BTO, Clean Bhutan and officials and school teachers from Samtse Dzongkhag and other sectors.

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- University of Melbourne, Australia for donating books worth many thousands of dollars to SCE for the Bachelors of Arts in Social Work

- Assam Don Bosco University and Edith Cowan University, Australia for their unwavering support in the research and development of the SCE's Bachelors of Arts in Social Work curriculum.

Welcome Address by the Dean of Research and Industrial Linkages

Social work practices in Bhutan has always been guided by its rich cultural tradition and values such as generosity, compassion, love and the philosophy of Gross National Happiness. These timeless, profound wisdoms has influenced social relationships, social services, community life, and Civil Society Organisation's (CSO) work in modern Bhutan.

In an effort to understand and preserve these Bhutanese traditional values in social work practices, Samtse College of Education (SCE) is launching a Bachelor of Arts in Social Work (BA in SW) programme in July 2019. It is the first of its kind in the country. The programme, grounded in Bhutanese contexts, aims to prepare the next generation of social work professionals with rich knowledge, skills, professsional values and ethics.

Additionally, Samtse College of Education in partnership with UNICEF Bhutan is organizing this International Conference on "Emerging Social Work Practices and Education" coinciding with the birth anniversary of our beloved Late His Majesty DrukGyalpo Jigme Dorji Wangchuck. Through this conference, Samtse College of Education aspires to connect with the social work academia, practitioners and researchers from Bhutan and outside and engage in generative dialogues to reflect on how Bhutan can bring synergy between modern social work education and Bhutanese cultural values. Further, the proceedings and deliberations of the conference will also provide a road map to Samtse College of Education and the Royal University of Bhutan (RUB) to contextualize its social work curriculum by integrating Bhutanese cultural values and contexts with global social work contemporary knowledge, skills and professional ethics and values. One of the many special highlights of the conference were the Keynote Addresses by globally renowned social work academics and practitioners.

This conference aims to achieve the following objectives aligning the key theme; Dialogues on new dimensions in social work practices

- Bring together interested social work professionals, academia and researchers for professional exchanges and share trends in social work education and practice;
- Advance knowledge on the role of indigenous cultural values and GNH philosophy on social work education and practices in Bhutan, South Asia Region and the world;

• Examine ways to integrate the impact of globalization, free market, religion, and government policies into social work curricula including the development of new models of social work practice that respond to a wide range of social problems with particular reference to South Asia;

There will be four Keynote Addresses and 22 paper presentations, with 11 international participants that includes the keynote speakers and also nine Bhutanese presenting their work.

A range of papers will be presented to highlight a few:
1. Understanding social work profession in Bhutanese context
2. Child Rights and Child Care
3. Exploring Buddhist Social Work
4. Widowhood: Concept, Experiences and Social Work Practice
5. Social Work and Palliative Care: Understanding Chronic Sorrow

The Modality of the conference is organized into two Plenary Sessions in two days (i.e. 2nd& 3rd May) with two keynote addresses in each of the plenary, and parallel paper presentations across two venues over the two days. And it will be concluded by a panel discussion. We would remain hopeful that everyone will have an enriching and unique experience from this conference.

Your Excellency, Keynote Speakers, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentleman I would like to thank you for your gracious presence on this occasion. Kadrin Che!

Dr. Kinley
Dean of Research and Industrial Linkages
Samtse College of Education

CONTENTS

The Global Social Work Definition and the Global Social Work Statement of Ethical Principles: Towards a Decolonized Ethics

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Abstract

In 2014 the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) and International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) adopted the Global Definition of Social Work, which represents an epistemological shift from previous definitions. This required a review of the associated ethical principles of social work. The Global Social Work Statement of Ethical Principles (GSWSEP) was approved by the IASSW and IFSW in Dublin in July 2018. While previous definitions and the previous 2004 Statement of Ethical Principles reflected liberal humanist values and a Western hegemony, the 2014 Definition and the GSWSEP recognise the global nature of the social work profession. Informed by multiple voices through global consultations, and ensuring the representation of voices from the Global South, the GSWSEP emphasises the inter-subjective and inter-dependent nature of human dignity and human rights, Levinas' philosophy of being for the Other and Ubuntu, and the notion of the embodied vulnerability of humanity. In this article, the Ideal with some of the more controversial aspects of the 2014 Definition and the GSWSEP, elucidate new concepts introduced into the GSWSEP, and I problematize core principles of social work as a response to calls to decolonize social work.

Introduction

In 2000, the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) and the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) adopted the following definition:

The social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilizing 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.

Despite the above being a major improvement on previous definitions, it was one of the most short-lived definitions in the history of the profession. Reflective of the power of virtual global communication, that facilitates more democratic participation, no sooner was the definition adopted and disseminated, there were widespread critiques. Some colleagues from some countries in the Asia Pacific region expressed the view that the definition's emphasis on social change was inappropriate, and that it should rather underscore the importance of continuity, stability and harmony, and challenged the reference to social work as a profession. On the other hand, colleagues from Latin America were concerned that the document did not pay sufficient attention to the radical and political dimensions of social work, and that there was insufficient attention to social work's social change mandates. Some colleagues from different regions, except North America and Canada, claimed that the definition's reference to human rights constituted a Western bias, expressing the view that human rights is an individualistic construct, and thus not applicable to non-western parts of the world. In view of these critiques, the IASSW and IFSW established a joint Global Social Work Definition Taskforce to review the 2000 Definition. I filled the position as co-Chair of the Definition Taskforce on behalf of IASSW. After a painstaking process of global consultations, and a thorough interrogation, deconstruction and reconstruction of every word and concept, the following definition was adopted in 2014.

Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility, and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and Indigenous knowledges, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing (IASSW/ IFSW, 2014).

Our global consultations, our responsiveness to the diversities of social work practices, and our understanding that social work's contextual relevance is one of its most unifying, constitutive aspects, granted us humility enough to add the following: *The above definition may be amplified at national and/or regional levels*, as part of the definition.

The 2014 Definition is followed by a six-page commentary that unpacks key concepts and ideas, reflecting that the Definition is informed by critical, post-colonial theories and that it underscores structural, emancipatory and participatory approaches to research, policy, education and practice. There is detailed commentary on social work's core mandates, principles, knowledge and practice.

In terms of social work's core mandates, the emphasis is on: working towards social change as well as promoting social stability, continuity and harmony; promoting social development, which is conceptualized as desired end states, strategies for intervention, and as a policy framework; and the empowerment and liberation of people. The core principles are: respect for the inherent worth and dignity of human beings; doing no harm; respect for diversity; upholding human rights and social justice; co-existence of human rights and collective responsibility; and interdependence. In relation to knowledge, the commentary deals with the meaning of science, with emphases on critical, post-colonial social work theories that are applied and emancipatory; the co-construction of knowledge; and on Indigenous knowledges. Regarding practice, the commentary details the importance of working *with*, rather than for people; the system stabilizing and system de-stabilizing functions of social work, highlighting that social workers engage on a continuum from direct work with individuals to political level interventions, and it challenges personal-political and micro-macro dichotomies (See the 2014 Global SW Definition document for a fuller exposition).

Review of the 2004 Ethics in Social Work, Statement of Ethical Principles

Given the epistemological shifts in the 2014 Global Definition, compared with its 2000 precursor, the IASSW and the IFSW saw a need to review the Ethics in Social Work, Statement of Ethical Principles (hereafter referred to as the *Statement*) that was adopted in 2004 (IASSW/IFSW, 2004). The 2014 Global Definition recognises that social work education, research and practice are informed by a wide range of theoretical and philosophical understandings and cultural values, and it requires that social workers interrogate the taken-for-granted assumptions underlining basic principles in the 2000 definition, such as doing no harm, respect for diversity, liberation, human rights and social justice. Thus, a joint IASSW/IFSW Taskforce was created to review the *Statement*. This review, which culminated in the *Global Social Work Statement of Ethical Principles*- hereafter referred to as *GSWSEP*- used the 2014 Definition as its point of departure. It was an even more challenging process than developing the Global Definition (See Sewpaul and Henrickson, 2019 for details regarding the processes in developing the *GSWSEP*).

Given the range of taken-for-granted assumptions and the rhetoric that underscore social work ethics, the rootedness of social work ethics in hegemonic Western liberal discourses, and the calls for the decolonization of social work education, research and practice, IASSW chose to problematize the *Statement* and re-think ethics, rather than make minor revisions.

The Chair of the IFSW Ethics Commission, on the other hand, expressed the view that decolonization was not part of their remit, and chose to make minor changes to the *Statement*. This impasse resulted in a compromise where IFSW adopted a brief version of the *GSWSEP*, and IASSW an expanded version. After a protracted and difficult process, IASSW and IFSW reached agreement on the following nine main principles, which appear in the final *GSWSEP*.

1. Recognition of the inherent dignity of humanity
2. Promoting human rights
3. Promoting social justice and equity
4. Promoting the right to self-determination
5. Promoting the right to participation
6. Respect for confidentiality and privacy
7. Treating people as whole persons
8. Ethical use of technology and social media
9. Professional integrity

Each of these principles has a number of subthemes. The expanded version of the document can be accessed on the IASSW website in Chinese, Dutch, English, French, Japanese and Spanish (International Association of Schools of Social Work and International Federation of Social Workers, 2018) and the briefer version on the IFSW website (International Federation of Social Workers, 2018). The *GSWSEP* was unanimously adopted at the General Assembly of the IASSW and the General Meeting of the IFSW in July 2018 in Dublin, Ireland. As with the 2014 Global Definition, colleagues are encouraged to use the *GSWSEP* as a benchmark against which they develop national and/or regional ethical codes.

Ethics is complex and developing a *GSWSEP* was even more complex, and it is upon application that the strengths and limitations of the document might be fully appreciated. The *GSWSEP* is not cast in stone; it is intended be a dynamic document, and the IASSW encourages colleagues, upon application, to provide feedback to the Taskforce. Responses may be sent to the Chair of the IASSW Taskforce, Vishanthie Sewpaul on the following e-mail address: Sewpaulv@ukzn.ac.za

In this article, I deal with the controversies around the professionalization of social work and human rights; elucidate new concepts that were introduced in the *GSWSEP* compared with the previous *Statement*; discuss how certain core social work principles were problematized; and I conclude by making a call to respect unities in diversities, rather than dichotomize our worlds.

Professionalization: A Double-Edged Sword in Social Work

One of the major critiques from some colleagues in the Asia-Pacific region is the IASSW's and IFSW's conceptualization of social work as a profession. I agree with Akimoto (2013) that "current professional social work has somewhere lost something – which used to be its essential central element – through industrialization, secularization, occupationalization and professionalization" (p. 1).

Born within the period of modernity, formal social work in the West began to take on the omniscient voice of science in the logical-positivist tradition. While this provided the profession with a legitimating framework, it began to prevail over the community roots of social work, such as the Settlement House Movement of Samuel Barnett and John Ruskin in the UK, and Jane Addams in the US, thus representing a double-edged sword (Franklin, 1986; Sewpaul,2010). Logical-positivist rationality, which has come to be universalized, has significant impact on social work's ontologies, epistemologies and practices, including its formulations of codes of ethics and codes of practices. Thus, the taken-for-granted education, research and practice frameworks, rooted in the natural sciences and transposed into the social sciences, that support researcher/practitioner non-involvement, detachment in working relationships, neutrality, generalization, replication, separation of the professional from the personal, technical-bureaucratic models in social work, and the demand to prove one's truth according to positivist empiricism's all too often linear reductionist reasoning have attempted to dominate the professionalization of social work (Bauman, 1993; Henrickson & Fouché, 2017; Sewpaul, 2010; Sewpaul & Hölscher, 2004). Such emphases have derided alternative and different ways of knowing and doing, embedded in critical, postmodern, postcolonial theoretical understandings and Indigenous knowledges.

In its in attempt to gain legitimacy within the narrative of science, "social work adopted, with the language of 'skills', 'techniques' and 'diagnosis', a modern conceptualisation of its relationship with its clientele as one between the expert subject and his or her object" (Sewpaul & Hölscher, 2004, p.31). Addams structural and community oriented approaches to social work, and her focus on ethically informed social action, lost credibility in the face of calls for the adoption of the scientific approach, as "empiricism, measurement and a search for 'truth' became the dominant research approach" (Bisman, 2004, p. 114). Social work emulated the natural sciences in striving for recognition, status and professionalism, and it was this model that was exported through colonialism, missionisation, and the European attempt to subvert Indigenous peoples throughout the world.

The profession's preoccupation with proving itself a science, and the growing impacts of neoliberal capitalistic and new managerial discourses and practices undermined the primacy of values in social work. Thus, the production and dissemination of narrowly defined quality standards, prescriptive codes of practices, procedural manuals, assessment schedules, technical check-list approaches to working with people, and shifts to resource management, cost-efficiency (doing more for less in the shortest time possible), quantification and measurable outcomes became entrenched. Paradoxically, while these approaches are intended to grant greater professional recognition, they actually serve to de-professionalize social work. At the heart of professional social work is integrity [which includes the Five Precepts – abstaining from lying, stealing, killing, sexual misconduct and intoxication (Nhat Hanh, 2018)– which, although frequently violated, are universally shared values],research-informed and ethically-informed practice and education, contextual practice-informed education, the co-construction of knowledge, reflexivity, process, relationship building, empathy, tuning into the life worlds of people, reciprocity and mutual engagement. There are no quick fixes in working with people.

Akimoto (2013) writes of social work's loss of credence and how people, for various reasons, seek assistance from faith-based organizations, which in the Asia-Pacific region often – not always given the multiplicity of faiths in the region - means assistance from Buddhist monks and nuns, rather than formal welfare organizations. Sewpaul and Henrickson (2019) detail the case of a young social worker in Norway who was concerned about disciplinary action for the transgressive act of caring about the people with whom she worked. Given the narrow conceiving of ethics and the dominance of technical-bureaucratic approaches in social work, it is not surprising that other social service workers are often more empathetic and responsive to the needs of people. Sewpaul (1997) asserted that it is "unfortunate that the more professionalized social work becomes, the more mechanized it comes to be in the process, with the elements of caring and loving being seen as the domain of lay helpers" (p. 138).Logical positivist science and new managerial and neoliberal pressures in social work have superseded the place of care, love and compassion, which social work must reclaim.

I do not eschew the professionalization of social work. The argument is against the valorization of the modernist, logical-positivist scientific construction of professional social work, which has been equally damaging for social work in the West, as it has been for the Rest of the world.

We must support alternative constructions of professionalism rooted in postmodern, transpersonal, radical, emancipatory and feminist views that embrace non-hierarchal, egalitarian relationships; Indigenous approaches; worker involvement; subjectivities; relational ethics; and kindness, love, care, responsiveness and compassion, which cohere with the Buddhist ethos of Bhutan. Social work must be based on a humanized science and a humanized professionalism.

Human Rights and Social Work

There are key documents, adopted by global social work bodies that conceptualize social work as a human rights profession, and highlight the centrality of human rights and social justice in social work. The *GSWSEP*, the 2014 Global Definition, the Global Standards on Social Work Education and Training (Sewpaul & Jones,2004), and the Global Agenda (IASSW/ICSW/IFSW, 2012) resonate the provisions of various international conventions and declarations on human rights. Despite competing strands, and the triumph of individually based approaches[1], it is social work's commitment to social justice and human rights that has granted, and continues to grant, the profession its legitimacy.

At the International Conference on Emerging Social Work Practices and Education, Bhutan 1-3 May 2019, Professor Akimoto presented a definition titled Buddhist Social Work, which reads as follows:

Buddhist Social Work is human activities to help other people solve or alleviate life difficulties and problems based on the Buddha-nature. Buddhist Social Work always finds causes to work on the material, or social arena, as well as the human or inner arena, working on both arenas in tandem. Its fundamental principles include compassion, loving kindness and mutual help, and interdependency and self-reliance. The central value is the Five Precepts. The ultimate goal us to achieve the well-being of all sentient beings and peace.(Akimoto, 2019).

It is not within the scope of this article to detail the points of convergence and divergence between the above definition and the 2014 Global Definition, both of which must be read together with their full commentaries. A notable omission from the above definition is reference to human rights.

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[1] Working with individuals per se is not a problem. The concern is the dominant pathology-based approaches that focus on individuals as "clients" who need to be treated or fixed, rooted in the medical paradigm. In working with individuals, social workers must adopt emancipatory methodologies that see people as active agents and that allow for empowerment and liberation, and the politicization of casework. Problems at the individual level are manifestations of broader structural concerns and injustices. Rather the blame persons for their lot in life, we must use validation and strategies of consciousness-raising so that people (either as individuals or as part of a group/s) are empowered to recognize, challenge and confront structural sources of oppression and/or privilege.

When questioned about it at the conference, Professor Akimoto's response was that: "Human right is theirs; it is the West's".

The rest of the world has claimed that the West's focus on autonomy and individual rights, rather than on the collective, and its preoccupation with rights, rather than duties and responsibilities lack relevance for their contexts (Sewpaul, 2016). I have previously critiqued the liberal framework within which human rights discourses are embedded, which is antithetical with more participatory, caring, social democratic and people-centred frameworks (Sewpaul,2015b; 2016). The USA, on the basis of liberal democracy, invokes the 2nd amendment in people's right to bear arms and thus their right to kill, which is contrary with the values of social work, and that of extant religions. In view of the legitimate critiques of human rights discourses, and the attempt to decolonize social work, the 2014 Global Definition and the *GSWSEP* challenges liberal discourses, and they embrace individual and group rights, the co-existence of human rights and collective responsibility, and the inter-subjectivity and inter-dependence of human dignity and human rights.

To dichotomize between the individual and the group is a fallacy. Individuals and groups co-exist and mutually constitute, and so are their rights and responsibilities. Our conception of personhood must not be restricted to Kantian, liberal notions of individual persons; it must include families, clans, tribes and communities, and ultimately we must be able to see the unity of self with that of the universe. Thus, acknowledging the dignity of humanity means opposing the legal and cultural subjugation of women and girls, as individuals and as groups, as much as it means opposing colonialism, capital punishment, mob lynching, genocide, and working towards climate justice. To throw out human rights is like throwing out the baby with the bathwater.

Readings on the life and teachings of Buddha reflect that He was deeply moved by human suffering, as seen in the Four Noble Truths, which educate about witnessing the existence of suffering; recognizing the causes of suffering; having the goal of ending suffering; and ways of ending suffering (Nhat Hanh, 2018). The prominent Vietnamese monk and social activist, Thich Nhat Hanh, asserts that if those causes rest in socio-economic and political structures that are violating, then our efforts at ending suffering must be located there (Nhat Hanh, 1993). Buddha was a pacifist, and He appealed to kings, politicians, religious leaders and villagers to adopt values and practices that engender peace, non-violence, non-discrimination and greater equality (Nhat Hanh, 2018).

While not of the placard carrying type, as contemporary activists are usually portrayed, the Buddha is the embodiment of validation of human dignity and the protector of human rights. If social workers have to emulate the life and teachings of the Buddha, how are they to do this in the face of a negation of such a fundamental principle?

We need to differentiate between Buddhism and Buddhists. While Buddha and Buddhism represent the highest virtues of humanity, which if adopted by all of humanity will certainly contribute to a more peaceful and just world–unfortunately, not all who call themselves Buddhists display Buddhist virtues (Khyentse, 2007). People of all religious faiths, and those who are agnostic theists and atheists bear the seeds of the *Bodhisattva*. All religions have the potential to liberate or to subjugate, and with subjugation comes oppressions and violations of human rights. And whenever there are human rights violations – which is universal - the rights of people must be clearly articulated, and there must be mechanisms in place at various levels of society - local, national and global - to promote and protect these rights, and people must have access to redress when their rights are violated.

Core Principles Problematized

While values are central to social work, they are contested. Some of the formulations of codes of ethics, founded on confidentiality, individualism, and self-determination, are rooted in hegemonic liberal discourses and practices that may not be main features of social work in more collectivist, interdependent societies. Many Indigenous systems of knowledge locate human beings in relation to the natural environment (Watene, 2016) and emphasize interdependencies and co-operation, rather than independence and competition (Letseka, 2014; Sinha, 2017; Godden, 2017). In its deepest meaning this resonates the Buddhist teaching on dependent or inter-dependent coexistence; the complex chains of inter-dependencies in all phenomena and in existence and non-existence (Nhat Hanh, 1999; 2018). Buddha told his Bhikkus, "When you look at a leaf or a raindrop, meditate on all the conditions, near and distant, that have contributed to the presence of that leaf and raindrop. Know that the world is woven of inter-connected threads. This is, because that is. This is not, because that is not", and taught that we be able to see the whole of the universe in every *dharma*; in a single leaf and in the self (cited in Nhat Hanh, 2018, p. 409). Acknowledging Indigenous knowledges and practices, calls for the development of more respectful and compatible ethical frameworks (Drugge, 2016; Gone, 2017; Reamer & Nimmagadda, 2017). This is what the 2014 Global Definition and the *GSWSEP* strove to do.

There are various complex issues related to self-determination. The emphasis on self-determination belies the power of ideology that often contributes to the *voluntary intellectual imprisonment of the free subject* (Sewpaul, 2013, p.120). The dominant societal discourses become so *inscribed in our blood*, as the title of Sewpaul's (2013) article reads, that we are robbed of the freedom to think. The relationship between structure and agency is "an extremely complex one and needs to be seen in dialectical, not dichotomous, terms. More often than not, it is difficult to distinguish what is within or outside our cognitive frames" (Sewpaul, p. 120). Thus, the *GSWSEP* addresses the need for ongoing, critical reflexivity and self-awareness on the part of social work students, educators, researchers and practitioners.

Individuals are self-determining in that they do have the freedom to think. But the freedom to think does not guarantee the exercise of individual self-determination. The self-evident truism on the right to self-determination, denies the often oppressive, marginalizing and exclusionary socio-cultural, economic and political determinants of human development and functioning and, appropriated by conservatives, it reinforces neoliberal discourses on self-reliance (rather than our obligations towards those less fortunate in society), choice, and freedom - that can, in neoliberal capitalistic societies, include the freedom to die from starvation! (Sewpaul, 2015b). This truism also fails to acknowledge the control functions that social workers exercise in fields such as child protection, criminal justice and mental health (Doel, 2016). Rather than a rhetorical call to respect self-determination, and while not abjuring the importance of self-determination, the complexities associated with self-determination are acknowledged in the *GSWSEP*.

Confidentiality, which is an essential ethical principle in applied professional disciplines, also remains a contested concept in more communitarian societies. Families, friends and neighbours might believe it is their prerogative—even their obligation—to know everything about each other, and their exclusion might be construed as disrespect for elders and a violation of cultural norms. In some parts of the world an entire extended family and other community members may be expected to be included in decision-making and problem-solving, thus putting social workers in an ethical quandary, as they might be called up for disciplinary inquiry when an individual's right to confidentiality is deemed to be breached. While affirming the centrality of the principle of confidentially, the *GSWSEP* introduced the concept of "shared confidentiality", where everyone party to the decision (as one will do e.g. in working in an inter-disciplinary team) makes a commitment to confidentiality. This would work well when the interests of the group are aligned with the interests of the individual.

Sadly, as this does not always happen, the *GSWSEP* adds a qualifier that such shared confidentiality must not violate the rights and dignity of individuals.

Doing no harm, self-determination and respect for human dignity are held as sacrosanct, universal ethical principles in social work. However, the interpretations of these, mediated by culture and context, often extend the boundaries of moral relativism to the point of tolerating violations of human rights, particularly the rights of Indigenous peoples, people living with disabilities, women and children, and stigmatized religious, sexual and gender minorities (Sewpaul, 2015a; 2016). The GSWSEP has transformed these concerns into ethical principles, suggests ethical ways in which social workers might respond to practices which violate human dignity and human rights, and highlights the role of the social worker as cultural mediator (See e.g. principles 2.3; 3.7 and 3.8 of the GSWSEP).

It is also not unusual for a single ethical principle to be interpreted and applied very differently, e.g. where the principle of respect for diversity might be used to support persons of different sexual orientations or to condemn homosexuality, as "it is not in our culture." There is no axiomatic or fool-proof moral guide to guard against such interpretations except for education, dialogue, openness, reasoned debate, a mutual willingness to resolve disagreement in constructive ways, and when necessary non-violent non-cooperation. In interrogating the principle of "respect for diversities" the GSWSEP specifically cautions against a shift towards a moral relativism, where culture is used as a disguise for human rights violations. In the disguise of respecting diversity, social workers often remain silent in the face of human rights violations in many contexts. The paramount value is human dignity - that every person is worthy of honour and respect. While we respect diversities, we must draw the line where people's rights to dignity, security, bodily integrity and life are threatened.

The Embodied Vulnerability of Humanity

In the *GSWSEP being for the Other* (Bauman, 1993; Levinas, 1985; Sewpaul, 2015a) is made the normative in social work. The potential asymmetrical nature of such relationships might bear the risk of minimizing and patronizing the *Other* in social work relationships. But the appeal for such an approach lies in the *GSWSEP*'s emphasis on inter-dependence, where one's humanity is recognised in relationships with others, echoing the value of *Ubuntu* (Letseka, 2014) with the African maxim, "I am a person through other people", or "I am because we are", which is also reflected in other value systems across the world. Levinas (1985) and Bauman (1993) asserted that the moral self, accords the unique *Other* that

priority assigned to the self. For Levinas, to be responsible means to make oneself available for service of the *Other* in such a way that one's own life is intrinsically linked with that of others. This is reflected in the *GSWSEP*. The justification for the self begins with the *Other;* our responses to the call of the *Other* define ourselves. Thus, Bauman's (1993) emphasis on meeting with the stranger – the *Other* as Face – not as persona, a mask worn to signify the role played.

The unconditional positive regard implied in the above inheres of spiritual beliefs of humankind, the dignity and infinite potential that every human being possesses, and the importance of differentiating between the person and her/his conduct, attitudes or circumstances that might be in need of change. Linked to this is Bergoffen's argument (cited in Feder, 2014) that we must challenge "the traditional grounding of human rights in the principle of individual autonomy" to protect and privilege "the humanity of our embodied vulnerability" (p. 117). By virtue of being born into this world each one of us is vulnerable. Of particular salience to social work is Bergoffen's contention that dignity predicated on autonomy is a fantasy born of "a desire to escape the risks of being vulnerable", and the importance of conceiving of human rights, not in a narrow sense of "inhering within individuals" but rights located "between" individuals (p.179). In a similar way, Miller (2017) sees dignity foregrounded in relationality; the recognition that one's humanity is only recognized in solidarity and inter-connectedness with the *Other*. No person is totally autonomous and independent; we are all interdependent. Intersectionality highlights various social criteria that render some persons/groups of persons more vulnerable than others (Henrickson and Fouché, 2017; Sewpaul, 2013) but we are all imbricated in socio-political and economic systems, socio-cultural conventions, and dominant societal discourses, thus rendering us all, even the most privileged of us, vulnerable to varying degrees.

Understanding the embodied vulnerability of humanity might: facilitate more empathetic tuning into the life worlds of people; minimize othering as 'us' versus 'them'; counter the idea of the social worker as expert; contribute to more egalitarian relationships; and enable us to truly *be for the Other*. It is for these reasons, and the attempt to de-stigmatize social work services, that neither the 2014 Global Definition nor the *GSWSEP* uses the word "client", but refers to people who we work or engage with. The *GSWSEP* acknowledges the complexities that our embodied vulnerabilities bring to the social work relationship, with Principle 1.3 reading as: "As social workers we (as do the people whom we engage with) bring to the working relationship our histories, pains and joys, values, and our religious, spiritual and cultural orientations. Critical reflection on how the personal influences the professional and vice versa must be the foundation of everyday ethical practice". Thus, the need for the awakening of awareness and consciousness.

The Awakening of Self and the Awakening of Society

The *GSWSEP* emphasizes that the self must be the cite of awakening and politicization, and accepts a dialectal relationship between individual and societal consciousness. Asian beliefs and practices place a pre-eminence on self-liberation and enlightenment, as reflected in the Noble Eightfold Path i.e. righteousness of views, aspirations, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness and concentration (Nhat Hanh, 2018), and the *yoga of synthesis* (yoga meaning divine union) (Sri Swami Sivananda, 1979). The yoga of synthesis combines karma yoga (service and work made love in action); raja yoga (contemplation and meditation); jnana yoga (knowledge, discrimination, awareness and understanding); and bakthi yoga (the path of devotion) (Sewpaul, 1997). The skill of karma yoga is aimed at *niskarma karma* which teaches us to perform our work without attaching ourselves to the results of action. This is often erroneously taken to mean working without the expectation of a salary or reward. The Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, verse 47 says: "Thy human right is for activity only, never for the resultant fruit of actions…neither allow thyself attachment to inactivity" (in Sri Paramahansa Yogananda, 1999, p.281).

We have control only over actions in the current moment, not over the outcomes, yet we are often preoccupied with fears born out of past experiences or anxieties about the unknown future. The lesson is that if we dedicate ourselves 100%, unconditionally, to the task/action at hand the consequences will take care of themselves. For example, if a student commits himself or herself totally to the task of studying for an examination, rather than ruminate about the past or live in the future by trying to predict the content and outcomes of the examination, the desired results will be achieved. The overarching focus in Asian worldviews and practices is on mindfulness: living in the present; understanding the nature of the self and the universe, and their inter-relationships; and the non-permanence of all phenomena. The enlightenment derived from the understanding of the latter enables one to approach pleasure and pain; praise and criticism, and life's sufferings with equanimity, to transcend birth and death, and to achieve nirvana or moksha (liberation from the cycles of birth and death). If some these worldviews and practices are infused into social work on a global level, they can certainly contribute to a more enhanced profession.

The *GSWSEP* speaks of liberation from the entrapments of our own thinking. The*GSWSEP,* which applies to teaching, research and practice contexts, has specific principles related to this with 4.7 and 4.8 reading as:

Social workers recognize that dominant socio-political and cultural dis courses and practices contribute to many taken-for-granted assumptions and entrapments of thinking, which manifest in the normalization and naturalization of a range of prejudices, oppressions, marginalizations, ex ploitation, violence and exclusions.

Social workers recognize that developing strategies to heighten crit icaconsciousness that challenge and change taken-for-granted as sumptions for ourselves and the people whom we engage with, forms basis of everyday ethical, anti-oppressive practice.

As social workers, we are products and producers of our socio-political, economic and cultural worlds. The ideologies that we live by are reflected in, and re-inforced by, dominant social systems such as the family, education, culture, religion, economics, politics and the media (Sewpaul, 2013). It is, therefore, critical that we become aware of cultural, political and capitalist ideological hegemony and appreciate how we can shift from being the "subjected being "to a free subject that is the author of and responsible for its actions" (Althusser,1971, p.182) – very much like the Buddhist pursuit of liberating oneself from the constraints of one's own thinking. With the development of self-awareness and critical consciousness (Freire, 1973) there is a greater chance that social workers would use their voice and skills to contribute to socio-economic, political and cultural change and development.

The self must become the site of awakening and politicization and this must begin in the classroom (Sewpaul, 2013; 2015a). Emancipatory social work is directed at heightening awareness of external sources of oppression and/or privilege that hold the possibility of increasing people's self-esteem, courage and conviction so that they, themselves begin to confront structural sources of poverty, inequality, marginalization, oppression and exclusion (Sewpaul & Larsen, 2014). Rather than the conventional outward focus on understanding people who we work with, the *GSWSEP* emphasizes that, as social workers, we need to begin with ourselves. Without transformation of our consciousness, we are not going to be able to transform societal consciousness. The systems, structures, laws and policies "out there" that we often criticize, are representations of the collectivities of consciousness of all of us, particularly of those who occupy powerful positions. We must be courageous enough to examine our complicities in reproducing the prejudices and harms that we wish to repudiate. Educators must provide safe spaces in the classroom to facilitate such self-examination, using strategies such as reflexive writing and dialogue, experiential teaching and learning, the biographies of students, journaling, art, drama and real world lessons.

Written for a global audience, the 2014 Global Definition and the *GSWSEP* do not address any specific religious and/or spiritual leanings. Some might interpret the empowerment and liberation that is referred to in the Global Definition from a pragmatic, secular point of view only, while others might combine this with understandings of liberation theologies. The pedagogical and practice implications of principles 4.7 and 4.8 will be contextually interpreted and applied, as social work educators, researchers, practitioners and students adopt strategies that challenge and change ideological control of consciousness that are usually at the heart of prejudices, discriminations, oppressions, poverty and inequality based in inter-sectional social criteria such as race, caste, gender, class, sexuality, religion, language and geographic location (Sewpaul, 2013; Sewpaul &and Larsen, 2014). Buddha did this 2500 years ago as he challenged the nobility, and the religious and political elite to understand and undo the structural sources of discriminations and injustices based on social position and caste, and to some degree gender, and to use non-violence, loving kindness, care and compassion to bring about a more just and equal world (Nhat Hanh,2018), thus highlighting the inextricable relationship between the personal and the political (Sewpaul, 2015a). The life and teachings of Buddha also represent a challenge to consumerism, and neoliberal capitalism, which is having adverse consequences across the world, including Bhutan (Khyentse, 2007).

Conclusion

In this article I have elucidated key shifts in thinking represented in the 2014 Global Definition of social work and the *GSWSEP*, dealt with some of the controversial aspects of these, and I have discussed how the *GSWSEP* has problematized central ethical principles in social work. The 2014 Global Definition and the *GSWSEP* have enormous implications for how we conceive of social work and how we engage in social work education, research and practice.

The ultimate for social work, on a global level, must be producing the kind of social worker that is claimed for what is termed Buddhist social work. The Buddha says: "We ourselves are the very essence of liberation and enlightenment … You are what you are already searching for" (cited in Nhat Hanh, 2018, p. 460), and the teachings offered for this are open to all of humanity. Social workers, infused with the highest possible standards of ethical practice, as they work with individuals, families, small groups, organizations, communities and/or societies at large for the betterment of humanity, represent an engaged Buddhism (Nhat Hanh, 1993) or the karma yogi (Sewpaul, 1997). To talk of Buddhism in social work is different from the claim to a Buddhist social work. We must see the positive and liberating values of Buddhism in social work, as we must see the values of

Bahaism, Christianity, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Hinduism, Sikhism, Taoism, Zoroastrianism, and the 1000s of other existing religions of the world in social work. To do anything differently is to be parochial and ethnocentric, which Buddhism disavows. In being engaged Buddhists, we must heed one of the main guidelines provided by Thich Nhat Hanh:

> *Do not be idolatrous or bound to any doctrine, theory or ideology … Do not think the knowledge you presently possess is changeless, absolute truth. Learn and practice non-attachment from your views in order to be open to receive others' viewpoints*. (Nhat Hanh, 1993, p. 17).

While we challenge Western hegemony, and develop locally relevant social work education, policies, research and practices, our vision must be one of unities in diversities. We must desist from dichotomizing and polarizing our worlds (Sewpaul, 2015a; 2016), which is the source of so much of the world's conflicts. The 2014 Global Definition and the *GSWSEP* seek those unities in diversities. But like everything else, they cannot be seen to be sacrosanct and immutable. They were constructed at a period of time, and within the constraints of existing knowledges, and constructive engagement with these documents and feedback from all parts of the world are welcome. In doing so we must understand the impacts of the historical antecedents of social work, and of neoliberalism and new managerialism on social work, not only for the Rest but for the West as well. The West is, in many ways, the victim of its own modernity and development. By decolonizing social work; re-claiming the merits of love, care and compassion; mindfulness; and educating about approaching life's challenges with evenness of mind, the Rest can make valuable contributions to global social work. While making these contributions, we must desist from an "us" versus "them" discourse, and ethnocentric approaches that suggest that "ours" is morally superior to "theirs". Culture, religion and spirituality are frequent foci of divisions. As the whispers of the wind transport ideas, values and beliefs across continents, cultures and religions our message to our children, our students and all those round us must be that while *this* is our religious and/or spiritual home/s, and is sacred to us, others have their religious/spiritual home/s that are just as sacred and special to them. In transforming our thinking, we can contribute to transformations in societal consciousness, and all of us can, as engaged Buddhists and karma yogis, agitate for structural changes that promote greater equality, social cohesion, harmony, stability, social inclusion, non-discrimination and peace.

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Buddhist Social Work: An Emerging Social Work Trend in Asia

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Western-Rooted Professional Social Work

Now we have new problems—Drugs, HIV/AIDS, youth unemployment, more crimes, school bullying, domestic violence, divorce, mental health[2], …… as well as old problems. To combat them, "let's introduce various modern professionals, including social workers." "Catch up with the Western 'developed' countries."

Some of you may be worried a little—"We do not know what social work is," "what should we teach and practice?" "Don't worry", say social workers who are from social work "developed" countries. "Social work has the long history of over 150 years." "It was born in Europe and matured as a professional social work in North America. It has now spread all over the world." "You can follow and learn from them." "You are now a member of our global social work community".

Some of us are worried a little. Several years ago, we had the revision of IASSW/IFSW International Definition of Social Work. Asian and Pacific 11 countries' national associations and their alternative bodies convened in Tokyo in 2010. It was an APASWE (Asian and Pacific Association for Social Work Education)'s workshop.

All of them said the definition, or the current social work, did not fit them, or was "theirs", or "West's". "Something is awkward," "Our culture is different from theirs,"……They were your forerunners, who had started social work under their colonial regimes or after their independence after WWII. Participants were Christians, Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, atheists (unbelievers), as well as other people.

Reference to "Buddhism and Social Work"—Vietnam and Sri Lanka

"Listen to the voice of the voiceless" is our culture. The then APASWE president visited countries that did not attend the above workshop. Dr. Nguyen Hoi Loan, a social work associate professor of Vietnam, referred to the relation between Buddhism and social work for the first time[3]. "Two thousand years ago, Buddhism came to our country."

"Elements of Buddhism have infused into every corner of daily lives of people regardless of being Buddhists or non-Buddhists"—value, the sense of beauty, the ways of feeling, thinking and acting, morals, manners, and behaviors. "Without an eye on Buddhism, social work could not work well and be effective[4]."

The APASWE President initiated a research, "(Professional) Social Work and its Functional Alternatives," under the auspices of Asian Center for Welfare in Society, Japan College of Social Work (ACWelS-JCSW). Mr. Anuradha Wickramasinghe, a NGO leader of Sri Lanka, chose Buddhism as a functional alternative of social work while other countries' researchers chose spiritual healers, NGOs, volunteers, etc. He interviewed top leaders of the government, Buddhist community and universities in the process of the research and decided to set up a higher institute of social work education for Buddhist monks. The idea was to provide contemporary social work to Buddhist monks so that they could serve people better and more effectively. Some brief lectures were given about the contemporary social work, i.e. Western-rooted professional social work. As soon as they started discussion, however, they said that we had been doing the same or similar for more than 2500 years while Western-rooted professional social work for 100-200 years.

Journey to Explore "Buddhist Social Work"

Several monks, university professors, NGO leaders set out the journey of Buddhist social work.

Asian Center for Social Welfare Research, Shukutoku University, organized a five country research, "Buddhist 'Social Work' Activities in Asia" in 2014. Participating countries were Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Myanmar and Nepal.

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[2]This is the text of the keynote speech edited with the text of the presentation, "Exploring Buddhist social work: Outline of the joint research project, " made by the current author as the substitute of Josef Gohori, who had to cancel the participation due to an emergency.

[3]The country started the exchange with the outside world in the 1970s. The modernization since around 2000 has progressed at speed.

[4]He proposed a research, "The participation of Buddhism in social work," later to the then APASWE president, who implemented it as an APASWE, ACWelS-JCSW, and the University of Social Sciences and Humanities, VNU, Hanoi, joint research.

[5]The government seemed to adopt Western-rooted social work in its national policy. Four or five schools of social work in Vietnam increased to 40-50 within ten years.

Later the research was expanded to cover other seven Asian Buddhist majority countries and regions—Laos, Cambodia, Bhutan, Mongolia, China, Korea and Taiwan. It turned into a 12 country and region publication project, "Exploring Buddhist Social Work" series.

Temples function not only as institutions for religious practice but also as places for medical care, education, social work, and other social activities. A huge range of activities have been provided by Buddhist temples, monks, and followers as well as Buddhist NGOs: Activities for children, elderly, people with disabilities, educational programmes, medical care, rehabilitation centres, agricultural support, donations, disaster and civil war victims, building roads and bridges, protecting forests and many others. Some of them may be categorised in the social development in Western-rooted professional social work. Reasons why monks started this involvement in "social work" activities, were also found.

In this whole process, ABC Model was constructed to clarify three different usage of the term of "Buddhist social work", various meetings such as forums, expert meetings, conferences and workshops organized, Asian Buddhist Social Work Research Network formed among the research participants, and the working framework and definition of Buddhist social work formulated. Let's introduce ABC Model and the working framework and definition below.

The First Achievement— ABC Model

People use the term of Buddhist social work differently. Academic discourse is impossible. The ABC Model refers to the difference of the understanding of the term and concept. The table below is its summary.

In Model A, Buddhist social work means social work performed **by** Buddhist temples, monks, and followers. The Social work is Western-rooted professional social work and same as that performed by Christian churches, priests, brothers & sisters, and church members. The difference is only actors. In other words, Model A is a copy or conformity model. It is a classic prototype model.

Model B is a modification or indigenization model. Social work here is that modified with Buddhist elements, e.g. values, philosophies, teachings and knowledge & skills. Refer to the above Vietnamese idea (Section 2, p.3). This is the model which could be most easily accepted by the present mainstream

social work. The modified or indigenized social work is still the Western-rooted social work.

In Model C, social work here is not Western-rooted social work as in Models A and B, but "social work" as part of Buddhist practice and service although the practitioners and service providers may not even use the term of social work. Refer to the above Sri Lankan case. Model C (Section 2, p.3) has nothing to do with the globalization[5] and the better service of Western-rooted professional social work, but has its origin in Buddhism itself and its interest in the better Buddhist service.

Table 1

ABC Model of Buddhist Social Work—Three Understandings

Model A	Copy/Confor-mity Model	(WP)**SW by** Buddhist temples/monks/ followers (Actors are Buddhists)	The early years
Model B	Modification/ Indigenization Model	(WP)**SW** + Buddhist elements (values, principles, teachings, experiences, etc.) = modified/indigenized WPSW	The present mainstream
Model C	Independent Model	**SW** (≠WPSW) **of** Buddhism; Buddhist practice + lessons from WPSW, etc.	New challenge

Tatsuru Akimoto 14 December 2017; 5 Jan.r

The Working Framework of Buddhist Social Work

First, ten items were selected for the framework: Ultimate goal, Immediate goal, its Operationalization, Their concrete expression or the scope of service/ help, Understanding of their causes, Approach, Fundamental Principles, Central values, Subjects of practice (Actors), Objects which the subjects work upon, and Viewpoints lying at the foundation. And the answers were given to each item. See the box below.

To mention only a few features:

Buddhist social work keeps "all sentient beings" in mind, not only human beings. See the Item "Ultimate goal" as well as Item "Objects which the subjects work upon." "Understanding of the causes" of difficulties and problems people suffer and thus, the "Approach" to work for their alleviation and solution are unique from the Western social work.

Buddhist social work always see both the society side and the human inner side such as greed and selfishness. "Fundamental principles" are care and compassion, loving kindness, and mutual help, and interdependency and self-reliance, building and bonding of human relations, etc. Social justice and human rights are not found. "Central values" are Five Precepts.

The Working Framework of Buddhist Social Work

Ultimate goal: Achievement of the wellbeing of all sentient beings and peace and happiness

Immediate goal: Alleviation and solution of sufferings of human beings

Its operationalization: Sufferings → Difficulties and problems in life

Their concrete expression or the scope of service/help: Poverty, orphanage, disabilities, old age, diseases, HIV/AIDS, disasters, etc.; conflicts, civil wars and wars

Understanding of their causes: (a) Problems on the society side and (b) problems on the human side, e.g. greed and selfishness. [The cause of many social problems is capitalism and the human problems behind these.]

Approach: To work for alleviating and solving the individual's life problems and social problems. To take actions both at the individual level and the society level. [Community/Social development is included.]

Fundamental Principles: Care and compassion, loving kindness, and mutual help, and interdependency and self-reliance, building and bonding of human relations, etc.

Central values: Five precepts

Subjects of practice (Actors): Buddhist temples, monks/nuns, lay Buddhists, and the general people [Buddha nature resides in all people.]

Objects which the subjects work upon: Human beings in the broad political, economic, social and cultural context, all sentient beings, and gods; human relations; institutions, organizations, and systems.

Viewpoints lying at the foundation: The Buddhist views, philosophies, and teachings

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[6]"Globalization … has been…defined as the process of dissemination of values and systems of a central country to other regions by choice or coercion." (Ohno, 2000: iii)

Social work is one of the "values and system." Social workers tend to be critical of globalization and its products, but are rarely conscious of the globalization of social work itself. Now this Western-rooted professional social work is being disseminated from those central countries "by choice or coercion" to other regions whose values, culture, skills and knowledge are different.

Working Definition of Buddhist Social Work

Once the framework is well developed, it is not difficult to turn the list form into the sentence form.

Buddhist Social Work is human activities[1] to help[2] other people[3] solve or alleviate[4] life difficulties and problems[5] based on the Buddha-nature[6]. Buddhist Social Work always finds causes to work on in the material, or social arena, as well as in the human, or inner arena, working on both arenas in tandem[7]. Its fundamental principles include compassion, loving kindness[8] and mutual help, and interdependency and self-reliance[8]. The central value is the Five Precepts[10]. The ultimate goal is to achieve the wellbeing[11] of all sentient beings[12] and peace[13].

This was formulated mainly inductively through abstraction and synthetization from among understandings and ideas expressed by participants in discussions and writings over several years in the whole process of the Buddhist social work exploring journey above, and not deductively from Buddhism doctrines and theoretical understandings. There were various understandings and opinions even among participants, which required many foot notes. Small numbers (1~13) on shoulders of words, clauses, phrases, and sentences are its witness. Anyway, this is a working definition and must be refined over many years.

This working framework and definition are based on Model C discussed in Section 3[6].

The Next Step—Beyond the Abstraction of Cultural, National Differences

The next stage is to challenge more tangible, concrete topics based on the working definition.

Some countries have already exchanged experiences and ideas about curricula of Buddhist social work education in Buddhist universities and secular universities.

Each country team is now expected to take action on its own initiative to promote Buddhist social work in the fields of theory, research, education and practice. A few countries are groping independently for their first steps of Buddhist social work in their own countries.

The Vietnamese team is interested in a research on the collaboration among "Buddhist temples, governments, NGOs and corporations." A Sri Lanka university has already started the Buddhist social work track program. Mongolia and Thailand have been discussing the curriculum development on Buddhist social work. A Sri Lankan colleague is interested specifically in theory aspects and another colleague in practice aspect.

Now we have reached to the stage to consider national and cultural differences, beyond the working definition, for example, political and economic systems and conditions, the difference of levels of industrialization, "welfare state" and penetrated Western-rooted professional social work, and histories and traditions. The working framework and definition had been constructed freeing themselves from cultural and societal differences, and even differences in Buddhism[7], among countries, regions and societies.

The Asian Research Institute for International Social Work (renamed from Asian Center for Social Welfare Research, p.2), Shukutoku University, is now interested in implement two research projects. First "What Buddhist social work can do while WPSW cannot?" We need to collect empirical data, even by simple observation, to communicate with Western-rooted professional social work. All people say our culture is different from theirs. But we have to go further. We would like to find what the real characteristics/features of Buddhist social work are. Many differences people have repeated may be common with other religions, Christianity, Islam, and Hindu, and even non-religious activities. The second project is to learn about the current state of Buddhist social work in Buddhist minority countries in Asia, e.g. India, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines, as we studied regarding Buddhist majority countries.

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[7]The following is the working definition based on Model B by mainly Vietnamese colleagues who joined late the team.)
Buddhist Social Work is the social work based on the Buddhist philosophy[1]. It helps individuals, families, groups and communities enhance social functions, and promote their wellbeing and peace, and human happiness and harmony. It is an academic inter-discipline and profession,Buddhist Social Work professionals will demonstrate their knowledge and skills, values guided by the principle of Buddha-nature[2].

[8]Teavana, Mahayana, Vigirayana, and factions in each country. Some people think that Buddhism is a religion, some social philosophy, and some a system of Buddha's teachings for living.)

It may be a little too early to use the clause, "A new trend" (cf. the title of this speech).Our journey of Buddhist social work has just started. It will take a transmigration (smsāra) or two to construct Buddhist social work.

Why are we Interested in Exploring Buddhist Social Work?

There are two constituencies in Buddhist social work: People from Buddhism and people from social work.

The former people want to make Buddhist practice and work by temples, monks and nuns more effective, and serve and contribute to people and societies better[8]. Some of them may want to disseminate Buddhism and/or prevent its decline in societies by promoting Buddhist social work.

The latter people expect and welcome Buddhist monks and nuns to carry out Western-rooted professional social work (1) to complement the shortage of Western-rooted professional social workers and the lack of governmental policies and programs (as a social capital), (2) to make Western-rooted professional social work function in and contribute to societies more effectively and broadly (as a channel of indigenization), and/or (3) to disseminate or globalize Western-rooted professional social work to all over the world.

There is the third category of people, who are from social work community, but critical of the innocent dissemination effort, or the globalization, of Western-rooted professional social work. Their interest is in the development of social work itself. They want to make social work something truly of the world, to lead it to the third stage (cf. Europe (Stage I)→North American (Stage II); p.1). They are not interested in the copy and modification of the social work based on European and Northern American lives, societies and cultures, but interested in the understanding of the commonly acceptable social work based on the lives, societies and cultures of 200 countries and regions in the world[9].

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[9]Should monks be engaged in secular matters?" is a question. Four different answers are heard.
1. No, they should concentrate on "enlightenment".
2. Yes, allowable and/or must.
3. Either. It's a choice. There are wo categories of monks.
4. Both. They should be engaged in both activities

[10]APASWE and ACWelS—JCSW conducted "Internationalization and indigenization" research," during 2012-2014 in addition to the above mentioned "Functional alternatives" research.

"It (Western-rooted professional social work) does not fit us." To make it work for us either, (A) social work must change or (B) our values, culture and traditions must change. The former, (A) is currently the most popular approach, e.g. "indigenization". The latter, (B), which the past president of the IFSW insisted on once in a seminar is a fearful one.

Bhutan is proud of its culture and traditions representing the country's strength and identity, being situated as it is between two big powers. Is then, the indigenization approach acceptable? It might work better than "unindeginization" approach, but it cannot be the ultimate answer. This is because indigenized social work is still the same Western-rooted Social work as it were. Bhutanese society had been tackling and overcoming problems and difficulties by itself before the new social problems arrived. It may begin to develop its own social work model with and based on the experience and traditions of its own culture, learning from Western-rooted professional social work and other social work models.

In fact, Bhutan may not be a belated but a leading country in the field of socialwork. Bhutan may be the first that develops a social work model of its own and not use the template of the globalized Western-rooted professional social work but by paying attention to other social work models from the very beginning. Buddhist social work could be one such model.

Social Work in Bhutan: Challenging Ortdoies with a New Social Work Course

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Abstract

A new BA in Social Work is being offered at Samtse College of Education, Royal Bhutan University. The course provides a unique social work course which seeks a hybrid model tailored to the needs of Bhutanese society and its Buddhist traditions, while meeting the demands of the elements required of an international social work course. This paper is a conceptual paper that initially explores the international context for social work education and its underlying precepts. The particular elements that have been developed to create a hybrid course which brings together respect for Bhutanese society and cultural traditions, Buddhist principles and social work are then described. The challenges of finding a balance between the development of a 'purist' Buddhist approach and a hybrid model which seeks the best of both worlds are briefly examined. The value of finding a model which deepens students' understanding of Bhutanese Society, Buddhism and professional social work practice is recognised as a work in progress to which students, staff, government and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) or Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) will all contribute as the profession emerges.

Introduction

The BA in Social Work offered by Samtse College of Education includes in its opening invitation (https://www.sce.edu.bt/introducing-bachelor-of-arts-in-social-work/) to students the following message:

> *The programme aims to produce the next generation of social work graduates whose knowledge, skills and professional values will be guided by the wisdom of Jinpa (sbyin-pa) – the act of generosity.*

This is clearly not a Westernised social work program that is being offered, but one which is customised to the context of Bhutan. It suggests a bold vision which has tried to ensure that the course is aligned with the requirements of international social work, while holding onto concepts which are central to Bhutanese society. This paper describes the careful balance that has been sought between the international and the local country context. It potentially provides a contribution to the development of social work internationally as countries move from Western (orthodox) frameworks to those that are tailored and fit for the practice and policy context of the country.

International Context

Few social workers have not had to grapple with and explain the nature of professional social work. This will undoubtedly be true in a country such as Bhutan which has a strong history of social volunteerism led from local community networks and Buddhist monasteries. The role of professional social work will need to emerge in the context of health and social services in Bhutan and will no doubt be dependent upon who will provide funding for these workers.

There are however, some core concepts that lie at the heart of social work which configures the way in which workers will be trained. An important starting point is the international definition, a definition which has relatively recently been re-worked through consultation with a number of countries. A critical aspect of the consultation was to ensure that it was not driven by Western orthodoxies, but rather had significant input from Asia and Africa.

> Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that facilitates social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledges, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing (IFSW, 2014).

Central to the definition is the attention to social justice and human rights and recognition that social work is based around a collective endeavour rather than focused only upon individuals. The definition takes social work practice beyond counselling, and recognises that the development of communities and social cohesion are important aspects of social work practice. This is an applied profession and not one which sits making critical commentary from the sidelines.

A further important platform for international social work lies in the Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development (Truell & Jones, 2012). Addressing social and economic equalities, promoting dignity and worth of peoples, working towards environmental sustainability, and strengthening human relationships provide the foundations for the international social work agenda. Again, it is an agenda which is grounded in its breadth of work rather than defining a narrow base to the profession. The expectation from international social work organisations is that each country will adopt these four pillars and incorporate them into the education of social workers and their application in different fields of social work. In particular, it recognises the interconnection between social work education, practice, and engagement in local, national and international social policy (Truell & Jones, 2012).

While the international social work definition and agenda provides an inclusive vision for social work, other complexities arise in the development of social work education. Those students who embark upon an arduous three to four year course of university education assume that they will be paid as professionals in future employment, and that their degrees are recognised in other countries. To this extent, it is not only the aspirations of social work expressed through definitions and attention to a code of ethics for social work, but also the very practical requirements of course offerings.

International accreditation standards have emerged which provide a shared platform or understanding of elements that are expected in a social work course. These include: supervised practice placements; social policy analysis; counselling skills development; community and group work; national organisational and legal frameworks; and attention to different fields of practice. However, the specific country accreditation of social workers which is then recognised within different countries tends to be problematic (Papadopoulos, 2017). The recognition of 'qualified social workers' may often eschew the support for a global agenda with different countries setting their own accreditation for migrant social workers. In Australia, for instance, United Kingdom social worker qualifications are often not recognised in spite of the frequent exchange between social workers in each country. Recognition may be even more difficult where the social policy and social welfare agendas between countries differ markedly.

In this context, a range of different issues emerge which are both challenging and exciting. For instance, different countries provide contrasting examples of the balance to be found in the goal of social development and whether there is a focus on economic development or the development of civil society. Shek (2017) points out that Hong Kong has focused on economic development whereas the

social work agenda in Australia and New Zealand has a stronger emphasis on social justice and equality. Other issues emerge, particularly as new attention is focused on environmental social work practice which has a focus on the harmony of human and natural systems (Ramsay & Boddy, 2017). These issues of social development and the holistic relationship between people and their environment are ones which speak to the emerging social work agenda in Bhutan.

Core Concepts for Bhutan

Particular challenges and opportunities arise for the development of professional social work in Bhutan. A small nation nestled in the foothills of the Himalayas between India and China with a total population of little over 680,000 (Population and Housing Census of Bhutan [PHCB] 2017), it has its own challenges and opportunities concerning economic and social development. The economic development model is based on the philosophy of Gross National Happiness (GNH), which was first introduced in the late 1970s by the Fourth King His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuk. Drawing inspiration from the kingdom's traditional Buddhist culture, GNH rejects the pursuit of economic growth as the ultimate goal. Instead, it seeks to promote a holistic approach to balanced development and societal well-being, emphasizing sustainability, conservation, and translating cultural and social priorities into developmental goals geared towards the creation of a happier and more equitable society. Since GNH has a strong association with Buddhist wisdom, the art of cultivating happiness, which is a central concept in Buddhism, forms the core of GNH.

A complex array of organisations and institutions contribute to the promotion of the socio-economic development and realisation of GNH, with education playing an undisputed role. Accordingly, the Buddhist values of selflessness and commitment to others, harmonious co-existence and mind training leading to the development of the wisdom of compassion towards all sentient beings form the cornerstone of educational development across all levels in Bhutan. However, until very recently, no higher education institutions in the country offered social work education in the form of a formal study programme, in spite of its immense potential to contribute directly towards socio-economic development and the realisation of the GNH.

Samtse College of Education (SCE), which is one of the constituent colleges of the Royal University of Bhutan launched a Bachelor of Arts in Social Work – a four year programme, in July 2019. The programme is anchored in the universal Buddhist philosophy of right *View* (lta-ba), right *Contemplation* (sgom-pa) and right *Action* (spyod-pa) which will together lead to right *Fruition* ('bras-bu). The

programme is expected to produce the next generation of social work graduates whose knowledge, skills and professional ethics and values will be guided by the wisdom of *Jinpa* (sbyin-pa) – the act of generosity. This timeless wisdom of helping others through the act of giving has been an inextricable part of the Bhutanese cultural ethos and everyday life since time immemorial. It continues to influence the social relationships, social services, help and reciprocity, community life, and CSO works in modern Bhutan. Thus, the social work education at SCE will explore this tradition's philosophical orientation, wisdom, motivation and methods which are central to the Bhutanese society and culture. Consequently, it will help to preserve and promote Bhutan's unique heritage and its valuable knowledge forms through higher education and prepare students for ethically-guided, generalist social work in government, CSOs, corporate, academia, international NGOs, private research, advocacy development consultancies, and policy think-tanks.

Extensive volunteerism and community service form the cornerstone of social work education at SCE. This requires students to be critically aware of social wellbeing issues, develop commitment to individuals, families, groups and communities, and possess values of the social work profession which together enables them to contribute to Bhutanese social work alongside being mindful of the spiritual and secular values. As a result, the social work curriculum of education at SCE is unique in many ways.

First, and as mentioned above, the programme is grounded on the overarching Buddhist's wisdom of *generosity* (sbyin-pa) which prepares students to lead a good life by inculcating the principles of right *Understanding*, right *Intent*, right *Speech*, right *Action*, right *Livelihood,* right *Effort,* right *Mindfulness,* and right *Concentration*. These do not replace internationally accepted professional ethics and values standards for work professionals but they are expected to complement each other.

Second, the individual modules (courses) of the programme are all contextualised to the national needs and concerns. Understanding Bhutanese Society, Buddhism and Social Work, Bodhichitta Mind and Social Work, Working with Persons with Disabilities, Social Work Practice in Mental Health, Social Work Practice with Elderly, Gender and Family, Working with Youth are a few examples of the modules which are context-based.

Third, the fieldwork placement and learning forms the heart of social work training. In these placements, students have the opportunity to practice the skills, knowledge and values taught in class. SCE's social work programme has two fieldwork placements, each of a semester long duration (six months), together

accounts for 25 per cent of the total credit values of the entire programme. These fieldworks provide students with experience and work in the rural areas of the country as well as with the development agencies.

Overall, social work education at SCE will equip the students with a deep understanding of social work history, ideologies, theories and practices in the global context. The programme will also immerse the students in Bhutanese context-based social work experience including the practices influenced by Buddhism.

The Development of a Hybrid Model

The development of the BA in SW course has not been without its challenges. Striking the balance between a SW program tailored to the specific cultural values of Bhutanese society and the demands of an internationally recognised social work course has been the subject of much debate and practical planning. The College has sought a hybrid path to draw from Buddhism, Bhutanese culture and the central pillars of a social work accreditation.

However, the developers of the course have been challenged by proponents of a more 'purist' pathway. Professor Akimoto and colleagues at Shukutoku University in Japan argue strongly that professional social work was developed by the West and will therefore always be subject to a Westernised lens in the interpretation of social work (Akimoto, 2017). Some of the issues from their perspective stem from the problems with professionalisation. They argue that Buddhist monks and nuns have been providing social services to their communities for centuries, yet their religious commitments would never allow them to be paid as professional social workers. Similarly, it could be argued that community services have been provided voluntarily for centuries and remain a central instrument of cohesion in Bhutanese society.

To some extent, this is not a new debate (Baker, 1977). Throughout Asia and the West, professional social work has contributed to social planning, development, individual counselling and casework alongside charities, volunteers and religious organisations where nuns and priests are also not salaried social workers. There is no doubt that tensions can and do exist, with studies highlighting the ongoing dilemmas of professionalization. Nevertheless, recent studies have highlighted the way in which community development and funding from the state are contributing to new approaches to inclusion and partnerships across volunteers, the voluntary sector and the state (Geoghegan & Powell, 2006). The particular need for 'boundary spanners'; people who can negotiate across the boundaries between professionals and volunteers in organisations and communities is a nec-

essary skill (McAllum, 2018), and one which will be highly relevant with the establishment of professional social work in Bhutan.

However, it would be overly simplistic and disingenuous to the arguments put forward by Professor Akimoto to assume that the overarching dilemmas of volunteering, charity work and religious communities can be glibly discussed as 'tensions' with emerging professional social work. At the heart of the argument, is also whether Buddhist Social Work aspires to differentiate itself from professional social work and start with Buddhist principles to define the contribution of Buddhism to the social good of a society and the way in which these principles will be enacted by people in working to contribute and develop social service in their country (Akimoto, 2017).

While highlighting the enormous value of Buddhist principles to underpin social work, there are also important components of the ways in which Buddhism has become institutionalised or codified that require interrogation in the 21st century, and provide fertile territory for academic critique. These reflections particularly focus on problematic interpretations of *karma* which may lead to victim blaming rather than anti-oppressive practices that challenge inequality. For example, the paper by Tan (2019) titled *Karma, social justice and lessons from anti-oppressive practice for Buddhist practitioners* explores the way in which anti-oppressive practice which is central to social work teaching can be incorporated into the eight fold path. In this exploration, a passive acceptance of unequal interactions and social structures which can be one fatalistic interpretation of *karma* can be challenged in ways which contribute to a deepened understanding of the way in which Buddhist principles can contribute to a more generous and just society.

Similarly, Khuankaew (2010) also refers to herself as a Buddhist practitioner involved with working towards violence against women. She too, is concerned with the way in which the Buddhist notion of *karma* has been interpreted and internalised by the women she has worked with to fatalistically 'accept their lot', and as a result of their 'past life karma'. Like Tan (2019) she returns to the roots of early Buddhist teaching to challenge these distortions in the interpretation of *karma*:

> *The Four Noble Truths awaken us to see the suffering of women, its root causes and ways to end it. The Eightfold Noble Path guides us to create an awakened society. (p. 191)*

Buddhism encompasses not only practices but also profound philosophical and religious traditions which in a tertiary educational course will provide rich territory for discussion, debate and critical analysis. In this sense, the development of the hybrid social work course in Bhutan will bring together the depth of Buddhist

teaching with the lens of a social work and social justice analysis. The challenge for the course lecturers will be to find the balance and the synergy between the many interpretations of Buddhist principles with those intellectual traditions of social policy, social planning and counselling which are central to social work education.

Conclusion

The course developers at Samtse College have been well aware of these debates and there is excitement about finding a hybrid path with significant attention to both Buddhism and the more traditional elements expected in a social work course. Supporting students with skills as 'boundary spanners' to negotiate their role as professionals in an area where volunteers (both religious and community members) play such an important role will be one of many challenges to address. Creating a course which also deepens a student's understanding of their Bhutanese culture and Buddhist traditions in the context of a social work course provides a unique opportunity for innovation and leadership for social work internationally.

In conclusion, it is important that students who spend four years of their lives studying are equipped to be employed as professional social workers nationally and internationally. While a 'purist' approach to Buddhism and the development of Buddhist practitioners may have an important role in some countries, the chosen path in Bhutan has been the hybrid model. It seeks the best of both worlds to ensure that the pragmatic and spiritual aspirations of students are able to be met. The final form that social work in Bhutan will take will be very much determined by the students themselves, their lecturers, and the partnerships that will emerge with government and the NGO sector.

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Family Group Conferences and Bhutan:Helping Families Address their Conflict to Make Planning Decisions through Effective Use of the Preparation Phase of the Family Group Conference

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Introduction

Family group conferences originated in New Zealand in the 1980s in both child protection and youth justice and were enshrined in legislation in 1989 for all New Zealanders. This paper will focus on the use of family group conferences primarily in child protection work. However they can be used in a range of areas involving crises in families. It will provide information to help Bhutan decide the relevance of the practice to assist in managing social problems. Family Group Conferences have been used in a number of countries internationally, including Australia, the United Kingdom, the United States and Europe as a means of helping families experiencing conflict plan for the safety of their children.

As it has its roots in the kinship based Maori and Pacific Islander communities of New Zealand, it is a process that western countries have adapted to their societies rather than the West exporting their frame works and values to kinship-based societies. This has relevance to Bhutan, which has strong kinship networks that define family identity. Due to likely conflict occurring between family members and between families and professional services, sufficient preparation of parties is needed to ensure a productive family meeting takes place. Individual coaching of parties during the preparation phase helps reduce tension and enables family members to focus on the needs and goals of the family as a whole. Effective use of the preparation phase helps the family to heal rifts and achieve outcomes they previously had not thought possible.

Family Group Conferences

A family group conference is a meeting of extended family members who come together with relevant professionals at a time of crisis or impending crisis to formulate a plan to ensure the safety and wellbeing of one of their children. After significant preparation, the meeting is facilitated by an independent person, is ideally held at a venue at a time that maximises family participation, and takes place in three stages. The first stage is called the information stage, where relevant professionals inform the family of their assessments, legal issues and resources they can offer. Once the family have obtained sufficient information from the professional services, they move to the second stage of the meeting, which is their private time.

All professional information providers and the independent facilitator leave the room to allow families the opportunity to discuss what they have heard before developing a plan. Once the family have arrived at their plan, the facilitator and professionals are invited back into the room for the third stage of the meeting, which is the implementation of the plan (Hudson et al. 1996, Buford et al. 2000, Nixon & Lupton: 1999).

Crucial to the success of both the private time and the participation of family members is the preparation phase, which can take up to twenty hours and be spread over a few weeks. During that phase the independent facilitator contacts key family members for one on one meetings and other family members are contacted by phone following the sessions with the key family members. If the preparation of the key family members has been successful, other family members will follow suit and attend the meeting usually after having been contacted by the key family members. Should the key family members not be sufficiently prepared, it is likely that not many family members will attend and underlying conflicts will emerge. These impediments lead to a less useful information stage and potentially a conflict-ridden private time with no clear and committed plan emerging.

Conflict and Group Behaviour

In order to further understand the dynamics in extended families when they are asked to become problem solvers, it is useful to consider whether families are similar in behaviour to the general behaviour of groups of people who come together for various purposes. As there are overt and covert conflict behaviours taking place in extended families, particularly at times of crisis or impending crisis, it is useful to understand how and in what form that conflict might occur.

Extended Families and Group Behaviour

1. Power issues

Benjamin et al (1997, p. 111) state 'groups with strong invisible patterns of interaction can be quite controlling of members leading to conformity and a lack of creativity – the encouragement of a democratic process allows for diversity and openness.' Work with extended families in family group conference practice confirms that families have their own invisible patterns of interaction that are not apparent to outsiders. Whether the patterns lead to conformity in decision-making due to control issues depends to a large extent on the way power and authority are used by key family members.

Benjamin et al. (1997, p. 117) list a number of ways in which power, authority and leadership can be manifested. They are: coercive power (through fear), connection power, expert power, information power, legitimate power, referent power (charismatic authority) and reward power. Extended families participating in family group conferences might have elements of all these manifestations, with the most concerning being the use of coercive power through a tyrannical member. However experience has shown that this form of power alone is unlikely to encourage other family members to attend and participate in the private time.

Families tend to have key members with claims to power deriving from some parts of the list outlined by Benjamin et al. The role of the independent facilitator is to gain the confidence of the recognized 'power brokers' within the family so that they can encourage the participation of others. The family activates its own 'invisible patterns of interaction' to create opportunities for participation without the need of the facilitator.

2. Life cycles

Groups tend to have a life cycle consisting of forming, storming, norming, performing and mourning/reforming (Benjamin et al 1997, p.105). Extended families have formed by virtue of their kinship ties, with members usually being aware of their family or group identity throughout their lives. The storming stage relates to the preoccupation of power or authority in the group regarding how decisions will be made and who makes them. At times of crises or impending crises, families revert to a storming stage when challenged with information that disrupts the status quo. Prior to the crisis the family are at various levels of a norming stage, where a spirit of cohesion is needed for performing. The norming stage is crucial to families being able to tap into the unique aspects of their functioning through rituals that define their identity.

Traditional societies such as the Maori and First Nations people of Canada place a strong emphasis on rituals that reinforce their identity when coming together to resolve conflict (Love 2000; George 2000). Moreover, Lichtenstein (2005, p.225) highlights the specific rituals, practices and values of faith-based groups in the United States who exercise their spirituality when addressing matters of conflict. While these are examples of broad groupings of people who ensure cohesion through reinforcing their identity, all families are unique in the way they define themselves and use unspoken patterns of communication not apparent to outsiders.

3. Social goals perspective

Another way of understanding the extended family as a group within the context of family group conferencing is to compare it to the understanding of the 'social goals perspective' of certain groups. Benjamin et al (1997, p. 86) define the social goals perspective as 'a progressive political exercise directed towards the development of new forms of social consciousness and action, with an assumption of social responsibility to promote some form of social change.' Features of this perspective include :1) self-determination or agency, where the participants can make changes; 2) participation and a sense of belonging; 3) open communication; 4) each member to value acceptance and tolerance of difference; 5) reciprocity; and 6) equality, where all can learn from each other.

Benjamin et al (1997, p.97) state that before group members can be true decision makers they need power over resources in order to establish the potential of mobility, power over relationships to establish faith in their ability to act and power over information to establish understanding and objectives. The need for a family group conference at a time of crisis causes families to maximise the opportunity to move forward to improve their situation. Although extended family can tap into their sense of belonging and connection to work together respecting each other's qualities, they need the professional information providers/child welfare authorities to allow them to exercise power as decision makers.

Conflict in Extended Families

In order for extended family members to be able to adopt decision making similar to members of a social goals perspective group, issues of power and conflict need to be addressed before the strengths of their norming behaviour can be used to perform (make decisions). Tillett (1999, p.2) outlines two clear principles in conflict resolution: 1) 'conflict is essentially based in perceptions (rather than reality) and feelings (rather than facts) – it can only be resolved by dealing

with perceptions and feelings; and 2) most conflict is predictable with the most effective approach involving predicting and preparing for conflict.' Tillett (1999, p.16) provides a clear and simple definition of conflict as being 'when two or more parties perceive that their values and needs are incompatible' and further states (1999, p.5) that conflict occurs along a range from intra-personal to interpersonal, intra-group to inter-group. At the time of a family group conference all of these conflicts can be occurring.

1. Physical violence and child sexual abuse

Kinpower Associates (2000, p.15) state that at the preparation phase of a family group conference effort is needed by the independent facilitator to persuade parties to put their own issues aside so that they can focus on the needs of their children. While they state that threats of violence between family members is not unusual, they make recommendations as to how those threats should be dealt with in the preparation time.

They state that all family members should be spoken to regarding the threats with some discussion about how anger is to be managed and 'time outs' put into place to ensure safety and maximise participation. As a last resort, they recommend certain family members should be physically excluded and encouraged to share their views over the phone. Lupton and Nixon (1999, p.123) note that the power of veto of family members rests (sparingly) with the independent facilitator rather than the family, although families could withhold information about certain family members to ensure they do not attend and disrupt the planning meeting.

Meyer's doctoral thesis on the use of family group conferences in cases of child sexual abuse found that during the early stages of the preparation phase the view of family members about sexual abuse differed to those of the Department of Human Services. (2007, p.179). She found that family members either denied the abuse or challenged the professional risk assessment. In addition they tended to overtly support the alleged perpetrator, express blame towards the non-offending parent and reject the child.

Although Meyer did not go into the type of preparation undertaken by the independent facilitator prior to the family group conference, she found that after skillful intervention 'there was an overwhelming shift in the families' views about sexual abuse, most often from denial to recognition of the abuse.' The purpose of this article is to contribute to an understanding of how families such as those discussed in Meyer's thesis and those discussed by Kinpower Associates can be 'prepared' for a family group conference is such a way that they can overcome their conflicts between each other and with professional interveners.

2. Complexity and family resistance to intervention

Connolly (2007, p.10) is concerned about the increased complexity of family problems faced by child protection workers in New Zealand almost twenty years since family group conferencing was enshrined in legislation. She states 'increasingly risk averse practices can shift the pendulum toward professional decision making and away from family decision making even within a family-led set of legal principles.'

Connolly believes the child protection system is facing more complex family systems with multiple maternal and paternal parenting and step-parenting arrangements. In addition it has to cope with family violence across generations and between subsections of the family system. She further believes that high levels of skill and practice frameworks are needed to help protect vulnerable people within the context of family group conference practice.

Hudson et al (1996, p.11) outline the difficulties faced by independent facilitators during the preparation phase of a family group conference in trying to ensure the wider participation of family. These concerns come particularly from the parents of children under child protection investigation who feel threatened at the thought of extended family participation and include, 1) not wanting family members to know about their problems 2) fear of being scapegoated 3) not being in contact with other kin 4) not knowing how to contact other kin 5) desiring privacy and 6) not wanting to place demands on others.

Merkel-Holguin (2000, p.226) is concerned that in the United States there has been a trend to either minimize or dismantle the preparation time for family group conferences. She feels that minimal preparation might mean that the family does not have the opportunity to build a trusting relationship with the independent facilitator. In addition, the facilitator 'will not have time to interact with the family members, learn their patterns of communication and help them put aside long-standing differences not relevant to the purpose of the family group conference.'

Conflict Coaching

Before examining the usefulness of conflict coaching to help family members focus on perceptions and feelings about conflict rather than taken for granted facts, the context to this method of working should be discussed. Conflict coaching has developed as a variant of life coaching, which in turn came from the fields of 'humanistic psychology, counselling, adult education, organisational development and corporate training, consulting, mentoring, sports coaching and the rise of the human potential movement of the 1960s' (Posus 2007, p.17).

The coaching movement has drawn from the work of Martin Seligman in the field of Positive Psychology and is concerned with 'understanding positive emotions (contentment with the past, happiness in the present and hope for the future), understanding positive individual traits (strengths and virtues such as the capacity for courage, compassion, creativity, resilience, self control and wisdom among other things) and understanding positive institutions (study of strengths that foster better communities such as justice responsibility, parenting, teamwork among other things). (Posus 2007, p.26) The three steps taken through coaching to change behaviour to where a person wants to be are: 1) raise awareness; 2) make decisions;\ and 3) modify behaviour.

Brinkert (2006, p.518) defines conflict coaching as 'a process in which a coach and disputant communicate one on one for the purpose of developing the disputant's conflict-related understanding, interaction strategies and interaction skills.' This means it tries to make sense of the conflict, help plan with the disputant how to manage the conflict and to help with the most desirable communication behaviour.

Brinkert (2006, p.522) outlines five stages of the conflict coaching model as being 1) listening for the story and setting – this is to ensure the coach honours the position of the disputant by allowing them to describe the conflict in their own words 2) inviting multiple perspectives of the story – this is to help the disputant gain some perspective on their view by helping them see other viewpoints 3) clarifying the intentional story – this is where the coach helps the disputant to reappraise their initial story and consider what a successful outcome might look like 4) offering opportunities for living the story – this might incorporate insights related to new forms of communication, understanding conflict styles and techniques of negotiation and 5) facilitating story review and (re) direction – this helps the disputant develop a clear success story supported by the use of specific tools.

However there are limitations to Brinkert's five stages when applied to the preparation stage of a family group conference. Whereas these stages take place over a series of sessions negotiated between the coach and the disputant, due to time constraints the facilitator of a family group conference might meet key family members on only one to two occasions, together with follow up phone calls. Brinkert emphasizes that during the 'multiple perspectives' phase the coach does not advocate or promote a particular viewpoint or course of action. However while cautioning against directiveness, Brinkert believes that the expertise held by the coach should be used in a useful way. He states 'the coach has the responsibility to understand their client's point of view of the conflict, including the conflict context, prior to offering additional perspectives or specific practical opportunities.'

Wever (2005, pp. 10,11) uses a post-modern and narrative therapy frame-work when preparing families in conflict to the become decision makers regarding their own issues in family group conferences. Her approach is consistent with that of Brinkert, as she seeks with families to 'upheave the notion of "truth" where meta-narratives, theories and assumptions that underpin them are constructed.' This leads to helping family members question discursive truths and helps them to begin working with narratives other than the dominant and 'taken for granted' story. Wever seeks to help families construct alternative narratives that contribute to the development of altered realities, as she believes 'problem narratives can be deconstructed and re-authored.'

The Family as a Learning Organisation

In attempting to understand how extended families function as a group, this article has already discussed power issues within families and related aspects of the life cycle of groups to the dynamics that occur when families are faced with a crisis that might require a family group conference. In addition, extended families working toward a plan through the preparation phase and participation in a family group conference have some parallels with groups formed who have a social goals perspective. Drawing from systems thinking within organizations, there are some parallels between 'learning organizations' and extended family networks.

Senge (2006, p.13) defines a learning organization as 'an organization that is continually expanding its capacity to create its future' and that the process for doing so 'is more than survival or adaptive learning.' He is interested in help-ing organizations grow and be effective by helping them shift their thinking in a transcendent manner. One of the key methods of ensuring sustained and effective growth is through two methods of feedback – reinforcing or amplifying feedback, which is the engine of growth, and balancing or stabilizing feedback, which is de-signed to interrupt the growth process by way of delays and leads to more gradual and sustained growth (2006, p.79). Senge believes that the understanding of rein-forcing and balancing feedback is integral to understanding the building blocks of systemic thinking.

1. Reinforcing/amplifying feedback

Reinforcing feedback occurs when a small change builds on itself and whatever movement occurs is amplified producing more movement in the same direction. The impetus for change could come from the intervention of an independent facilitator working in a coaching capacity to help reframe goals in a positive and achievable manner. Senge (2006, p. 94) argues that the growth

process cannot sustain itself indefinitely once it has been set in motion to produce a desired result.

While creating a spiral of success, there are secondary effects that eventually slow down the success, which are part of the balancing process. He states that balancing processes always occur when there is goal oriented behaviour and compares the process to those occurring in the human body as mechanisms by which the body achieves homeostasis (2006, p.84). These include the ability of the body to maintain conditions of survival in a changing environment, such as eating when we are hungry, sleeping when we need rest and the body temperature gradually adjusting itself toward its desired level.

2. Balancing feedback

Senge (2006, p.86) believes balancing processes can generate surprising and problematic behaviour if they go undetected, as it looks as though nothing is happening and the status quo is being maintained when all of the participants want change. He states that the balancing process arises from threats to traditional norms and ways of doing things, with the existing norms being woven into the fabric of established power relationships. These norms become entrenched because the distribution of power, control and authority in organizations (and extended families) become entrenched. To overcome the resistance means the independent facilitator needs to discern the source of the resistance where the implicit norms are embedded within the power relationships.

Senge (2006 ,p.94) states as a management principle 'don't push growth – remove the factors limiting growth.' Consequently he believes the leverage for intervention lies in dealing with the balancing process and not the reinforcing process, with changes to the behaviour of the system as a whole only occurring when the independent facilitator identifies and changes the limiting behaviour. He sees no point in increasing reinforcing behaviour when what is needed is to weaken or remove the limiting condition.

3. Application of reinforcing and balancing feedback to extended families

There are parallels between working with learning organizations to bring about growth and preparation of extended families prior to a family group conference regarding the two process of feedback, reinforcing and balancing. The work of an independent facilitator in a coaching capacity is to reframe existing conflict so that parties can move beyond their own concerns and focus on the long-term welfare of their children following child protection intervention. As the independent facilitator works with key family members in the preparation phase to gain

their confidence in order for them to become problem solvers, reinforcing feedback comes from the family regarding their belief in their own ability. They mirror the expectation of success the independent facilitator has shown in them and have the potential to over-reach their capacity to establish and maintain a protective plan.

According to the model outlined by Senge, the family also begin to exhibit balancing feedback as they realize the intervention of professionals and the positive coaching of the independent facilitator disrupts established family norms and patterns. Consequently there is a tendency to minimize the extent of the abuse or neglect and to consider the professional intervention into their lives as being not as critical as it initially appeared.

Consistent with Senge's experience of organizations, the solution is for the independent facilitator to isolate the limiting factor(s) in the family that impedes growth and a change in behaviour. Families tend to return to a state of functioning that adopts the line of least resistance by wishing to maintain the status quo. An example would be a parent who makes promises to the extended family that they will change their behaviour in order to protect their child and the extended family choosing to believe this time it might be different even though they have doubts. As the intervention of 'outsiders' (professional service providers and the independent facilitator) into their lives is 'unnatural' there is a tendency for the extended family to be relieved once the family group conference is over and they can return to their previous lives.

4. Alignment and dialogue

In order to overcome the uneven growth and change pattern brought about by the interplay of reinforcing and balancing feedback, Senge (2006, p.217) discusses the concept of alignment as being 'when a group of people function as a whole'. He states 'if a team is aligned, a commonality of direction emerges and individuals energies harmonize.' Conversely if a team is unaligned it wastes energy. Senge (2006, p. 218) believes that individuals cannot be empowered unless the team is first aligned, as 'empowering the individual when there is a relatively low level of alignment worsens the chaos and makes managing the team even more difficult.' Consequently the team need to learn to align and develop the capacity to create the results its members truly desire.

In order to learn to align, Senge (2006, p.220) believes teams need to both learn to master and distinguish the differences between 'discussion' and 'dialogue'. He defines dialogue as being 'an exploration of subtle issues and a 'deep' listening to each other, which involves suspending ones own views at the same

time, while discussion is a search for the best view to support decisions that must be made at the time.' Dialogue is further defined as 'special conversations that have a life of their own and take us in directions we could never have imagined or planned in advance.' He believes people need to separate themselves from their thoughts and develop collective learning by participating in the pool of common meaning that is capable of constant development and change (Senge 2006, p.222).

Senge (2006, p.229) refers to the belief of the physicist David Bohm in stating that a facilitator is needed to hold the context of the dialogue, because without the skilled facilitator 'our habits of thought continually pull us toward discussion and away from dialogue.' The facilitator keeps the dialogue moving and ensures the dialogue does not revert to discussion, while at the same time not taking on an expert role that would distract group participants developing their own ideas and taking responsibility. He believes there is less need for a facilitator when people develop skills and experience in dialogue and states ' in societies where dialogue is an ongoing discipline there are usually no appointed facilitators.'

In attempting to clarify the differences between 'discussion' and dialogue' Senge et al. (2005, p.354) state 'in skilful discussion you make a choice, while in dialogue you discover the nature of choice.' They quote the philosopher Martin Buber regarding the meaning of dialogue as stating 'it is a mode of exchange among human beings in which there is a true turning to one another and a full appreciation of another not as an object in a social function but as a genuine being.' (Senge et al. 2005, p.359)

5. Relevance of alignment and dialogue to preparation of family group conferences

According to Senge, the path to alignment within extended families lies with the family's capacity to engage with dialogue, which has been defined as something deeper and more substantial than simply discussion. The preparation phase of a family group conference is essentially a one on one process where the independent facilitator coaches key members to feel confident about their participation and helps them manage potential conflict. Extended families come together either during the private time phase of the family group conference to engage in discussion/dialogue or by their own accord prior to the conference even commencing. With skilful preparation, it is not uncommon for extended families to arrive at a plan/solution to the crisis/impending crisis prior to the actual formal meeting with professionals taking place.

Drawing from Senge's quote from Bohm, independent facilitators are not needed when families have a capacity to move to dialogue, with 'some societies having a stronger tradition of dialogue without the use of facilitators'. The origins of family group conferencing came from Maori and Pacific Islander family decision making traditions in New Zealand, where Maori people in particular meet on maraes (spiritual meeting places) to discuss/dialogue important matters. As family group conferences are now held in Australia, the United States, Eastern and Western Europe, the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, practitioners in this area have found that families in these countries have the capacity to discuss and dialogue in their own way.

The practice of family group conferencing in all these countries incorporates 'private time', where the independent facilitator does not participate and where family plans are made. It is likely that the group norms within families are far stronger and more durable than norms established in groups of non-related people such as those with a social goals perspective. Consequently there is a stronger capacity to move to dialogue without the need for an independent facilitator to guide them.

The Independent Facilitator in Family Group Conferences

Although extended families have the capacity to move to dialogue due to their long-standing knowledge of and connection to each other, an independent facilitator is still needed in times of crisis or impending crisis to facilitate competencies within families through coaching to empower them to become decision makers. Crawford et al (2003, p. 394), when talking about whether there are basic competencies for families that either include or reject them as being suitable for mediation, state 'deciding for a party that he or she does not have the requisite capacity creates a disconnect within the mediator's primary role to facilitate a process of collaboration and self-determination by the parties.' For the purpose of this argument, the terms 'mediator' and 'independent facilitator' are used interchangeably in this case, along with 'mediation' and 'family group conference.' Crawford et al believe the mediator should set a tone to support self-determination and collaboration and create an environment where parties feel safe enough to discuss difficult topics.

This active intervention is consistent with Picard's belief that mediator's help parties by facilitating their learning through asking key questions that help them experience insight. She states 'the mediator's most powerful learning-facilitation tools are questions: probing, reflecting, wondering, problem-solving, linking, delinking, reframing, and empowering questions' (Picard 2003, p.482). By taking

such an active role in supporting and shaping the behaviour of participants, and in the case of family group conferences, extended family members, independent facilitators are by no means 'objective and 'impartial' when preparing families.

Hughes (2003, p.492) confirms the impossibility or neutrality and impartiality by stating on behalf of mediators 'throughout the mediation process we (the mediators) co-form joint reality with the parties as feeling beings whose thought processes are largely inaccessible and whose reality is largely communicated through metaphors'. He believes that recognition needs to be given that 'mediators are co-participants in the conflict who bring their own unspoken and often unrecognised biases to the conflict'. Consequently, independent facilitators in family group conferences are unable to remain 'apart and separate' from extended families when family members need to engage in dialogue.

It is appropriate that they are not present in both the private time of the meeting and when the family caucus on their own before the meeting is meant to start. This crucial aspect of family group conferencing, one that allows true dialogue to take place among family members, is under threat by child protection practitioners in a number of countries trying to save time and minimise risk at decision-making meetings. There is a reluctance to believe families are competent enough to overcome their own conflict without the continued presence of a facilitator/chairperson.

Conclusion

This paper has examined the application of conflict coaching to the preparation stage of a family group conference and found it useful to help families heal their intra and inter personal differences. If sufficient attention is given to skillful preparation, practice experience has shown that either the family meeting does not need to take place due to solutions already having been found or that the family meeting is the vehicle for a successful plan to resolve the issues following their crisis. An understanding of families was gained using theories of group behaviour regarding power dynamics and their stages of progression and regression at times of crisis. In addition, they can be similar to groups with a social goals perspective when they work towards solutions to bring about improvements through an increase in consciousness.

An explanation of the differing levels and different types of conflict within families led to a discussion about the behaviour change process used in conflict coaching. In order for the coaching to be effective when individually working with members of a larger group, family behaviour was understood by considering them as a learning organization that seeks to maximize opportunities for growth while also seeking to maintain its homeostasis by limiting that growth.

To overcome the tension between families maximizing and limiting growth/change at the same time, the concept of alignment leading to dialogue was discussed as the best way for families to work effectively in making protective decisions for their children. An independent facilitator is required to create opportunities for the family to become aligned and empowered through effective coaching in the preparation phase of the family group conference. However it is the family members alone who should be in the 'private time' phase in order to achieve dialogue, which is a deeper and more soul-searching stage than simply discussion, to bring about positive change.

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The Right to be Listened to:

Acknowledging the Child's Voice in Family Court Processes

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Introduction

There has been increasing attention to the importance of children's contribution in decision-making processes that involve them and their future. One of the significant systems that involve children is the Family Court. The Family Court in Western Australia has the right and responsibility to decide on matters that affect the welfare of any children involved. Within such a context, it would seem relevant that the views of the child are listened to and heard, that is, to participate in decisions that may affect them and their future. What appears to be in debate is what 'participation by the child' actually means in contexts within which decisions about their lives and futures are made. According to Theis (2010) to participate is to take part in and Chawla (2001, 27) defines child participation as a process in which children and youth engage with other people around issues that concern their individual and collective life conditions. Ansell (2005) identifies participation as a way to enhance a child's rights to have control of their own lives.

However, what can be considered the linchpin in this debate are Articles 3, 5 and 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

Although most countries have ratified the UNCRC, it seems, according to Lonne, Parton, Thomson and Harries (2009) that children remain a group that is largely unheard and excluded from playing a prominent role in decisions regarding their rights, and the society in which they live.

This paper sets out to examine the rights that are provided to children under Articles 3, 5 and 12 of the UNCRC and how these rights are enacted in parental separations, in particular by Family Consultants when deciding if and when they will conduct a Child Inclusive Conference in the Family Court of WA in which to give the child voice.

It also addresses the question: Why is it that children remain unheard and excluded from participating, and why is it that adults continue to question the ability and competence of children in participating in decisions concerning their welfare?

What Rights are Provided Within Articles 3, 5 and 12 in the UNCRC?

Article 3 in the UNCRC States: In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration (UNCRC, 1989).

Could this be interpreted as meaning it is the responsibility of institutions (example: legal, statutory) to consider the 'best interests' of the children when decisions are made concerning their welfare? However, what does 'best interests' mean and whose best interests are being served?

Article 5 in the UNCRC States: State parties shall respect the responsibilities, rights and duties of parents or, where applicable, the members of the extended family or community as provided for by local custom, legal guardians or other persons legally responsible for the child, to provide, in a manner consistent with the evolving capabilities of the child, appropriate direction and guidance in the exercise by the child of the rights recognised in the present Convention (UNCRC, 1989).

Could this be interpreted as not just about listening to children but reconfiguring the relationships between adults and children? How well do adults understand child development to determine the 'capacity' of the child to participate? What is the role of the adult in making such a judgement?

Article 12 States:

1. States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

2. For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child (UNCRC, 1989).

Could this be interpreted as being the child's right to participate in both determining what issues matter to the child, and how they may participate in the

decision making process? Such an interpretation suggests that this may be a stage process where there is a need for children to be first asked what matters affect them and then how they might be involved in decisions on these matters?

In the last decade there has been a shift to improve children's participation in factors that influence their lives. Although children are social beings and are capable of taking on significant responsibility, they are still silenced and rendered invisible by the practices and attitudes of an adult society (Ansell, 2005, p. 225). Children are still denied many rights that adults have, such as political rights and economic rights (Ansell, 2005). According to Theis (2010), denial of these rights can greatly impact children's lives leaving children vulnerable to abuse, exploitation, and marginalisation in society.

To decide if children can participate, it first needs to be established what the intent of Article 12 is. The questions asked are: are children to be excluded from the same rights as others on the basis of age, and do adults have the right to override children's views and decisions on the basis that they know what is best for the child? Surely there must be a balance in giving children capability to participate in the society in which they live, and protecting them from making decisions that could harm them. Adults do not always know what is best for the child and children are considered the future of our society. In giving children opportunities to participate, children can take some control over shaping their own lives and the society in which they live.

Therefore is seems that an understanding of what is means to 'participate' is crucial to this discussion.

The Intent of Participation

Theis (2010) postulates that children are active citizens and can become as actively involved in social justice as anyone else, including access to information and swaying decisions made by public policy. However, it can be questioned if such practices of participation are practiced in contexts where decisions involving the child are made.

To participate, it would mean that children are given opportunities to engage with others about issues concerning their lives, and collaborate on decisions that can influence their lives. Adults often 'act on behalf' of children identifying it as acting in the 'best interests' of the child. This phrase 'acting on behalf' and in the 'best interests' is used frequently in the literature regarding children's rights and adds weight to the discussion on the ambiguity of the wording in Articles 3 and 12 (Bilson & White, 2005). Therefore, it could be considered that for the views of the child to be listened to and taken into account, the child should play

a more significant role in identifying what their best interests are and what they consider are the matters that affect them.

Although Article 3 refers to all actions concerning children, the focus in this paper is on actions that affect children in family court processes. For Hart (2009, p. 9) the process of family separation for all families is unique and dynamic. Within this process the child still needs to feel that what they have to say is being heard and their views will be respected and are confidential. However, Bagshaw, Quinn and Schmidt, (2006) cited in Hart (2009) suggest that in the court process children are not in a position to advocate for their own needs and interests, and they are often not consulted about their wishes regarding which post separation parenting arrangements are in their best interests (p.3). Although, Smith and Taylor (2003) suggest from their research that *children can effectively communicate their views, intentions and concerns, provided their social contexts and adult partners (family members and/or professionals) are sensitive to their perspectives* (p.1).

However, it could be suggested that the legal system is one area where children remain largely unheard and excluded from playing a robust role in the decisions that impact on their lives. Article 3 states that in all actions concerning children and their best interests must be taken into account. Article 12 states that all parties shall provide opportunity for children capable of forming their own views, the right to express it, and consider the views in relation to the child's age and maturity. Bilson and White (2005) argue that it is possible that these two Articles can be in conflict with one another and in the case of conflict, the child's best interests as determined by the judge often take precedence over the child's views and rights to participate.

Why are Children Unheard and Excluded?

Children continue to be excluded from full participation in matters that they may consider affect their own lives for a number of reasons (Lundy, 2007). One powerful factor influencing children's access to their rights is the way that society views the child. Within the literature, (Lansdown, 2001; Lundy, 2007; Malone & Hartung, 2010) there is evidence that much of western society still adopts a traditional depiction of the child as helpless, incompetent, a growing/incomplete adult, and in need of protection. Furthermore, Roche (1999) points out that children are often identified as not completely rational, lacking in wisdom (due to lack of experiences), and unable to know their own best interests. This idea of helplessness and perceived inability to know what is best may be attributed to the fact that in many circumstances children are unable to act on behalf of their own interests, especially if they have never been asked. To relate more

directly to this view, the perspective's on children's capabilities needs to be considered. One perspective is the 'caretaker' view. The caretaker view is based on the assumption that children cannot make intelligent decisions, due to a lack of cognitive capacity, experience and emotional consistency (Ansell, 2005). Adults that endorse this view act on the child's behalf to make decisions that children would have made, if they were adults. It could be considered that this perspective has a number of flaws. Firstly, adults cannot assume to know what decisions a child would make as an adult and secondly, the child's right to construct their own lives and have input into decisions that may affect their lives, is taken away. The 'child liberation' view challenges the 'caretaker' view as it argues that children are competent, social beings and are capable of making rational decisions (Ansell, 2005; Archard, 2004; Lansdown, 2001). Theis (2010) postulates that age is not necessarily an indication of competence, stating that *competence as a citizen is not limited to adults, and neither is incompetence restricted to children* (p. 346). Arguments against the liberation view are that young children lack competence to make adult decisions and some mistakes that come with rights may severely harm the child (Ansell, 2005).

For Lundy (2007), this view needs to be extended to consider the child's capacity to have meaningful input. The argument might be that if children do have the capacity to have meaningful input into decisions that may affect them, then parents might consider such input as undermining their authority and thus control. Furthermore, the question might be that if the intent and scope of Article 12 was fully understood and effort was put into assisting people working with Article 12 to understand its scope and intent would such an issue of concern for control (or lack of) continue to be of a concern?

That is, is it ignorance of the intent and scope of Article 12 that needs to be overcome?

Complexities and Contradictions with Child Participation

Asking for children's input can be seen by children as a way for adults to seek support for their decisions, rather than a genuine attempt to involve children in the decision making process (Mason & Urquhart, 2001). It has been argued that whilst the principle of child participation is accepted guidelines for putting the rhetoric into practice is not available (Mason & Urquhart, 2001). For example, according to Archard and Skivenes, (2009), there is general consensus among social workers in England and Norway that children should participate directly in their own cases. However, there

is uncertainty as to how to involve and include the child's views. Some of the difficulties in determining this relate to the discussion earlier on the perceived maturity of a child and what is in their best interests. However, as mentioned earlier there remains the potential conflict between the child's view of what is best for him or her and the adult's view. In these cases, as in the legal system, the adult's determination of best interests overrides the child's views. However, in the same study, Archard and Skivenes, (2009) noted that a number of social workers expressed the view that it is important to obtain the child's view, so that they feel consulted and are more compliant with any decision the social worker makes regarding their case.

Burfoot (2003) continues this argument suggesting that Article 12 of the UNCRC is "discriminatory and insulting" and that age does not determine capacity and that participation is often based on conformity to adult values rather than age. It fails to define guidelines concerning what age and level of psychological maturity is necessary, and what weighting is given to the opinions expressed by the child. Hence, it is up to the individuals involved and the judge or magistrate to use their individual discretion about what the child has said, and the potential bearing it could have on their decision-making process (Smart, 2002; Commonwealth of Australia, 1998).
The prevailing idea that children are at risk by being involved in the decision-making process is being challenged by the current research. Grimes and McIntosh (as cited in Hart, 2009, p.17) bring this idea back to simple terms by explaining the mediation process as finding out what kids want. Although this sounds like a simple idea, finding out want they want may not be as simple as children are not always forthcoming with their views (Boshier & Steel-Baker, 2007, p 551).

Boshier and Steel-Baker (2007, p. 554) suggest that children may not have a wish but they may well have a view that is helpful, in doing so defining 'wish' as being a narrower term than 'view'. View is the whole picture, not just the child wants. Children's views need to be considered and ascertained carefully. Children's personalities play a large part in the process of gaining their views. Some children take time to disclose information and need to feel comfortable with the person they are talking to and others may present their views straight away. Hart (2009) reports that the views of children are not just what they verbalise but also what they demonstrate through emotions, actions and reactions, including their parental views. Cashmore, Parkinson and Single (2007) detailed mixed views of children and parents about mediation, summarising that most children feel they should have the option to speak to a judge, even if they personally may not want to.

Application in the Family Court of Western Australia

The Family Court of Australia (FCoA) and the Federal Circuit Court (FCC) responded to the expectations of the UNCRC and the research mentioned above by developing models of child inclusive practice. The FCoA's Child Responsive Program, the Less Adversarial Trial approach and the FCC's Child Inclusive Conferencing require children to be interviewed at the early stage of their parent's dispute with the view to coming to a more amicable and quicker agreement on the care arrangements via a less adversarial process (McIntosh et al 2007).

These approaches, however, are not applicable in Western Australia because it was the only Australian jurisdiction that used section 41 of the Family Law Act (1975) to establish a separate State Family Court. Western Australia by passing the Family Court Act 1975 (WA), which has subsequently been replaced by the Family Law Act of 1997 (Fogarty, 2001), created the Family Court of Western Australia (FCWA). The FCWA established the Family Court Counselling Service (FCCCS) that developed its service delivery protocols independently of those used by its counterparts working for the FCoA and the FCC in the rest of Australia.

The Family Consultants of the FCCCS nevertheless, like their counterparts in the FCoA and the FCC, have since 2012 used Child Inclusive Conferences (CIC). The FCCCS, however, had to develop its own Child Inclusive Conference model because the procedures used by the FCWA differs slightly from that used by the FCA and the FCC. The small size of the team (there are 10 Family Consultants) meant that the model was developed in an organic rather than systematic manner and that parts of it has not been well-documented. The FCCCS's model has also not been formally reviewed or evaluated since its conception in 2012, but the Family Consultants themselves recognized that they lack the clear guidelines McIntosh et al (2007) recommend they should have to guide them regarding how to involve children. Family Consultants have nevertheless since 2012 developed a body of accumulated wisdom by making these decisions independently that can serve as the basis for the development of clear criteria that address the UNCRC.

To examine what processes to listen to the children's voice and their level of participation in the Family Court space, a study was undertaken with the Family Court Consultants' to understand how they decided if and when they would conduct a Child Initiated interview with the child to hear their voice.

Methodology

This study was developed from the philosophical assumption that there are multiple realities in the experiences of Family Consultants in deciding when to involve the child in a CIC. Social constructivism, (Cresswell, 2013), is an assumption that seeks the understanding of an individual's world and their subjective meanings of their lived experiences and views. As Family Consultants currently decide on whether or not to involve a child in a CIC based on their own understandings of the current situation at play, social constructivism was selected as the worldview assumption for this study. This study utilised a phenomenological approach, essentially searching for a common understanding in the phenomenon that the Family Consultant experiences, namely calling upon their independent accumulated wisdom when making a decision to involve or not a child in a CIC. In order to document how they may undertake this decision, the Family Consultants were asked to describe how they independently made this decision.

Data Collection

Data was collected from semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with open-ended questions, where the Family Consultants stated how they independently came to their decisions. After completion of face to face interviews, the interviews were transcribed and preliminary data analysis was undertaken to create a summary of the identified themes from the data. The Family Consultants were then provided with the summary to validate correctness of data gathered, review the identified themes and, provide clarification and or feedback on the identified themes. This feedback was then included in the final data analysis.

Ethics

The protocols for the study were approved by Edith Cowan University Human Research Ethics Committee and the Western Australian Department of the Attorney General.

Participants

In line with a phenomenological approach this study utilised a purposeful sampling strategy, selecting ten Family Consultants who work in the FCWA, ensuring all participants who have experienced the phenomenon contribute their experiences. Ten Family Consultants were selected as these were available at the time of the study and all agreed to participate.

The ten Family Consultants in the FCWA were contacted to participate by a senior member of the staff team. Although a small sample size, it is in line with Creswell's (2013), notion who suggests that the size of the sample depends on the qualitative design being undertaken, and phenomenology generally has approximately 3–10 participants.

Data Analysis

The study used a systematic approach to data analysis recommended by Moustakas (1994). The data from the interviews was categorised and clustered into themes (Creswell, 2013) representing the Family Consultants' comments of how they decided whether or not to initiate a CIC. The themes were then provided to the Family Consultants to review and comment upon. Any feedback received was included in the final data analysis.

Results

Within the data, twelve core themes were identified which were at times interrelated suggesting there is a range of criteria that impact on how the Family Consultants make decisions. The themes identified were: Children's ability to understand issues and implications and to give feedback; risk; importance of meeting parents first; time factor; hearing the child's voice; focus on resolution; complexity of issues; best interest of the child; opportunity to follow up; therapeutic aspect; practice experience and intuition and the role and the limitations of the role of family consultants.

Family Consultants are focused on ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the children and are conscious of the potential risk for children to be included in a conference. This, along with the complexity of the issues involved, Family Consultants were even more focused on the need to assess for risks, including stress caused through participation in the interview process, and to achieve the most positive outcome for the child. This is in line with the literature that suggests that child inclusive processes must balance the right of the child to be heard with the responsibility to ensure the child's safety and that it is not always in the child's best interest to give their views (Fernando, 2014; Henry & Hamilton, 2012; Roeback & Hoejer, 2009). Furthermore, the Family Consultants suggest that to truly listen to the views of the child, the child needs to have a more substantial role in identifying and determining what their best interests are and deciding what matters that affect them are (Banham, Guilfoyle, Lincoln, & Cavazzi, 2011). The Family Consultants reported they considered in their decision making how much weight the court might give to the child's views to avoid the child being inter-

viewed and then not listened to and feeling let down and or being interviewed more than once, and impact that may have on the child (O'Neill & Zajac, 2013). Family Consultants appear to balance the best interest of the child with Article 12 which outlines the right of the child to express their views in all matters that affect them.

The opportunity to meet with the parents first before making a decision to involve a child to get a sense of parent views, so as to gauge risks and benefits of including a child, is important as it enables them to collect as much information as possible to support the child. The CIC can be used to bring resolution to the issues; an opportunity to follow up to clarify any concerns; as a therapeutic tool to collaborate, build relationships; and put the parent and child at ease with the court process. More importantly, the data identified that Family Consultants are conscious of their decision making process; the role that practice experience and intuition play; and the importance of reflection and understanding why such decisions are made. Overall, Family Consultants were very aware of their role and the scope of their role and when necessary initiated other avenues, such as recommending a single expert interview, to ensure the child's voice is heard.

Thus, through analysis of the data of how Family Consultants determine whether or not to conduct a CIC, is it reality or wishful thinking that the intent of Articles 3, 5 and 12 are beginning to be understood and children are having their views heard, listened to and acted upon in regard to issues of parental separation that may affect them directly? (Fitzgerald & Graham, 2011).

Conclusion

For children to participate, they must be given opportunities to engage freely with others about issues concerning their lives and to collaborate on decisions that can influence their lives. The way society views the child is a major contributing factor to the continued questioning around a child's competence and ability to participate in decisions on issues that matter to them. Much of the literature indicates that many view children as helpless, irrational, lacking in wisdom, incompetent, in need of protection, and unable to know their own best interests. This appears to support the dominant view in today's society of the 'caregiver' perspective, despite its many flaws.

The UNCRC Articles 3, 5 and 12 are designed to ensure that children are granted their rights to have their views heard and taken into account in decision-making regarding issues that may affect them. Despite the intent of these Articles many decisions, especially around issues on parental separation, are made indeed with the 'best interest' of the child in mind. However, often these decisions

are made without fully taking into account the views of the child. A change in the way society views children would be needed to make any significant changes.

The literature does suggest that through providing children with a right to participate a number of benefits could be achieved, being an improved relationship between generations, reduced unequal power relations and allowing children to take some control over shaping their own lives and the society in which they live. Applying this to the Family Court space, it needs to be noted that CICs are, however, only one small part of the proceedings in the court and despite Family Consultants' pivotal role they are also only one small group of people involved in these proceedings. Those developing statutory and regulatory provisions will therefore also have to take into account the experiences and views of children, parents, judiciary and other stakeholders if they want to develop a CIC process that leads to the optimal representation of children's views.

Researchers must therefore ideally undertake research that establishes how children, parents, courts and lawyers believe the CIC process can be most effectively used to ensure that children are included in the process in a safe manner. Researchers should specifically identify the weight of Family Consultants' reports in comparison with the family and single witness expert reports and how differences between these reports should be reconciled. Overall it can still be argued that children are capable social beings that can contribute an exclusive view on issues that affect their lives, as long as they are first asked as to what issues they consider will or may have an effect on them. Participation, or having a say on matters that will affect you is not a right given to children by adults but a basic human rights for all human beings.

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Pioneering Supervision Training for School Guidance Counsellors in Bhutan: Reflections and Lessons for the Field

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Abstract

The ripples of the modern world and its troubles have deeply intruded the once ancient ways of the Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan. School guidance and counselling programs were initiated by the Ministry of Education in Bhutan in the late 1990s to combat increasing rates of violence, family disintegration, crime and suicide among the youth. As counsellors continue to negotiate the complexity of their roles within a traditional education system, they are bewildered by battles of different sorts faced by the younger generation. Supervision was introduced in 2018 to bridge the practice and knowledge gap and support the professional practice of the school guidance counsellors in Bhutan. The article aims to document and provide a reflective exploration of the trainers' experience in developing and delivering the first supervision training for school guidance counsellors in Bhutan. These first-hand reflections further aim to highlight the rules of conceptual engagement across different cultures and the importance of exploring and recognizing cross-cultural dialogue. This reflective paper is born out of a collaborative initiative between Edith Cowan University from Western Australia and the Ministry of Education in Bhutan. The article will be presented in a narrative format reflecting back and forth. It will include feedback and voices of the participants from the supervision training to illustrate aspects of experiences. Exploring ideas of supervision was meaningful and timely for Bhutan. However, cultural perspectives in contextualising supervision rules and practices to suit the Bhutanese setting will strengthen this professional thread.

*Keywords***:** school counseling, Bhutan, supervision, education, training, Australia

Background

"Supervision is often misunderstood with administrative supervision and so this will be an opportunity to highlight not only the difference but also emphasize on the necessity for professional supervision....."(Pelzom, 2019)

On 8th of December 2018, a new era in the school counselling profession commenced in Bhutan. A seminal work in Counselling Supervision was initiated by the Department of Youth and Sports under the Ministry of Education in Bhutan in collaboration with Edith Cowan University from Western Australia.

The first Clinical Supervision training in Counselling for the School Guidance Counsellors (SGCs) in Bhutan was conducted for forty-eight counsellors over a duration of six days in 2018. This training emerged in response to the Needs Assessment of School Guidance Counsellors undertaken in 2017 and was funded by UNICEF Bhutan (DYS, 2018). This article reflects on the development of the supervision training, its delivery and engages with international literature in suggesting ways forward for counselling Supervision in Bhutan. Voices of the participants from the training will also be presented to add to formative ideas in Supervision for counsellors in Bhutan.

The Beginnings

Historical narratives of the birth of counselling in Bhutan is mentioned elsewhere (Lester, 2015; Lorelle & Guth, 2013; Pelden, 2016). Counselling in Bhutan began in the schools in the early '90s. The first cohort of 12 SGCs (also referred to as full-time counsellors) in Bhutan were recruited in the secondary schools in 2010 (DYS, 2010). The number of SGCs grew overtime. In 2018, 102 SGCs were recruited, trained and placed to work in the schools. The authors of this article were both involved in the planning, executing and monitoring of the School guidance and counselling programs. Pelden left for her PhD studies to Australia in 2012 and stayed back to work for Edith Cowan University in Western Australia after she completed her studies, while Pelzom continued to expand the Counselling and guidance services for schools in Bhutan.

From the start, the counsellors who were also planners at the Career Education and Counselling Division (CECD) under the Department of Youth and Sports continued to provide varying forms of support to the SGCs.

The Guidance and Counselling Framework which was developed in 2010 incorporated a section on the Code of Ethics and Supervision requirement for SGCs (DYS, 2010). Correspondently, CECD counsellors led by Pelzom rendered incidental case consultations when required by field practitioners, and the SGCs. CECD was referred to as the headquarters for the school guidance and counselling programs and their practitioners (SGCs).

As counsellors continued to negotiate the complexity of their roles within a traditional education system, they were bewildered by the battles of different sorts faced by the younger generation. Pelzom's statement at the beginning of this article articulates the need for professionalization of supervision for counsellors. Pelzom also reflects on the need to distinguish the administrative and the clinical supervision needs and roles in Supervision. Mearns developed a comprehensive definition of supervision and says:

> *Supervision is a formal arrangement for therapists to discuss their work regularly with someone who is experienced in counselling and supervision. The task is to work together to ensure and develop the efficacy of the therapist-client relationship. The agenda will be the counselling work and feelings about that work, together with the supervisor's reactions, comments and confrontations. Thus supervision is a process to maintain adequate standards of counselling and a method of consultancy to widen the horizons of an experienced practitioner. Though not concerned primarily with training, personal therapy or line management, supervisors will encourage and facilitate the ongoing self-development, continued learning and self-monitoring of the therapist (Mearns, 2007, p. 1).*

Supervision in this sense is far from an authoritative administrative role. In contrast, Supervision is a highly specialized role with supportive functions, which are "Formative, Restorative and Normative" in nature (Proctor, 2000). As counseling is increasingly gaining importance across the different fields of human services in Bhutan, the need to provide quality services and enhance ethical practices are becoming evident. Besides, the counselling profession is fairly new to Bhutan and still perceived as a foreign practice by most locals, a narrative of resistance shared by developing countries in most Asian regions (Arulmani, 2007; Goh, Yon, Shimmi, & Hirai, 2014). The Bhutan Board of Certified Counselors (BBCC) is the only accrediting counselling body in Bhutan established in 2013 (BBCC, 2017b). BBCC which is at its formative stage recommends counsellors to "seek supervision from qualified professionals when necessary for the provision of quality counselling services and provide an appropriate referral when terminating a service relationship" (BBCC, 2017a, p. 2). However, there is a dearth of specialized

training in counselling and an absence of distinct supervision courses in the country. Simultaneously, school guidance counsellors voiced feeling burnout under the heavy weight of increasingly complex cases, minimal systemic support and a lack of professional development opportunities. A sense of inadequacy reverberated across the field. Both the field and headquarters felt the pressure to find or create a space to hold and respond to the presenting challenges and inconsistencies.

Supervision the Missing Link

"I feel that supervision had been the missing link in our Counselling department. Supervision is a must in the counseling profession for one to work effectively and is also an important tool of self-care (Participant)".

In the West, Supervision is a mandated service for helping professions. Supervision traditionally emerged in Social work in the 1800s and was only seen as an important aspect of the counselling profession in 1980s (Bradley, Ladany, Hendricks, Whiting, & Rhode, 2011). However, the quest to create supervision as a systematic and an intentional process distinct from counselling and psychotherapy is an ongoing process everywhere (Falender, 2018; Hoge, Migdole, Cannata, & Powell, 2014). Similarly, there is an organic process and emergence of Supervision in Bhutan.

Conversations between DYS, MoE and ECU lead to Supervision training starting in early 2018. Pelzom, who was then heading CECD met with Associate Professor Banham, Associate Dean at ECU in August 2018. Ongoing discussions between MoE and ECU culminated in the six days training project on clinical supervision which was delivered by Pelden in collaboration with CECD, DYS. Thus, the continuum of Pelden's outside/insider journey in co-creating the first supervision training curriculum for SGCs began (Foster, 1994; Lee, 2014; Pelden, 2016; Shah, 2004).

Supervision enhances professional competencies and ensures the quality and accountability of services (Bang & Park, 2009; Bradley et al., 2011). But most importantly, it is a crucial training component in the "development of a competent practitioner. It is within the context of supervision that trainees begin to develop a sense of their professional identity and to examine their own beliefs and attitudes regarding clients and therapy" (Corey, Corey, & Callanan, 2007, p. 360). It is crucial for Bhutan to contextualize theories and methods of supervision to suit their context or else an act of degenerative ambush of a rich fabric of Bhutanese communal practices and values is likely.

Importance of cultural considerations in counselling and supervision is advancing internationally (Ababio & Littlewood, 2019; AIPC; Bradley et al., 2011; Corey et al., 2007; Goh et al., 2014; Lester, 2015; Montgomery, Shepard, Mokgolodi, Qian, & Tang, 2018). One of the reasons being psychotherapy traditionally evolved in a Eurocentric world and was made available to people who could afford. It was an exclusionary practice as it did not cater to the minorities or embrace diverse world views (Ababio & Littlewood, 2019).

To start our assignment in creating and delivering the first supervision training, we had a sense of purpose and a rough frame of a plan to guide us. We were conscious that long streams of discussions and consultations were necessary to spark culturally respectful and nurturing supervision models for Bhutan which was missing. This training was soulful as it would plant the seeds and foreground many unseen plans and their promises. The section below will present reflections from Pelden on developing the curriculum.

Reflections from Pelden on the Trainer, the Taught and the Curriculum

"*Does it make sense*?" In the search for responses and lively interaction, I would hear myself repeating the same old question to myself and to the participants. The question was greeted by a nod, a gentle smile and silence. Sometimes tentatively confused glances in response to my ceaseless questions directed to 'learners'. That was the first day of the training.

I was returning to a familiar space after more than a decade to train at the office where I had started my career. There were at least fifteen familiar faces amongst the participants, those that I had trained many years earlier. Yet, in my introduction, I said: "*I feel that I am arriving within*". Here I was reflecting on negotiations within as the insider/outsider in the space. One's sense of identity is never devoid of context and so a part of me was negotiating in this space and time. I was also intentionally referring to another layer to this journey, the cultural shift and construction of new knowledge in that capacity. I was cautiously sifting and selecting theories and concepts in supervision and selecting my mode of presentation. My years of training and experience in Australia had taught me caution and the power of socially constructed knowledge and realities (Gergen, 1999, 2001). Further, my background in teaching topics on culture and diversity in therapeutic spaces lend to this caution.

As much as there is criticism in the West on violation of indigenous knowledge, in recent years, there is a concurrent conscious seeking of reparation and emergence of alternative models (Collins, Arthur, & Wong-Wylie, 2010; Green & Dekkers, 2010; Henriksen, 2006; Hull, Suarez, & Hartman, 2016). The reciprocity between the trainer and the taught create knowledge but there must be an active seeking of collaboration (Gergen, 2001). The conscious process of "relational flow" creates the possibility for alternate models that have "evolution of meanings" for unique contexts (Gergen, 2009, p. 46). As a trainer and the 'expert', I was offered a privileged space and trust to create beginnings of knowledge in counselling supervision in Bhutan. To rush with liberty was to let down a sacred responsibility. I let on cultural ethical dilemmas and "cultural micro-ethics" (Lee, 2014) to become my escorts in negotiating between the known, the assumed and the unknown, and in seeking a creative space.

My reflection at the beginning of this section makes an inference to a need to invite shared learning spaces in which the participants co-create. In this space, participants are expected to present with intellectual courage, curiosity and generosity alongside their peers. After all, participants were being trained as supervisors and supervision is seen analogous to consultative support (Despenser, 2011, p. 5). Bhutan has a strong hierarchal structure of social relations and inherent power dynamics shape relationships. Studies (Bang & Park, 2009) conducted in Asia with similar "cultural capital"(Bourdieu, 1973) validated that the Supervisors influenced the context and structure of supervision and supervisors took an evaluative stance in supervision. This finding runs counter to the notion of good practice in supervision and may impose 'symbolic violence' (Bourdieu, 1973, p. 165) in supervisory relationships. Interpersonal engagement and feedback is the main practice in Supervision and feedback can positively or adversely influence the competence of the counsellor and outcome for clients (Bradley et al., 2011). Thus, it was critical to invite the participants to explore, examine and understand the relationships between power and knowledge and their implications on their self and work. To create a culture shift in ways of being, thinking and becoming, participants were at the outset introduced to the idea of reflexive consciousness by Mills (1959) and reintroduced to the notion of reflecting by Dewey(Dewey, 1933). I was starting to prepare the first cohort of supervisees to be supervised and training supervisors alongside, as one is incomplete without the other.

The next section will detail the training curriculum, voices of participants followed by lessons and reflections in moving forward.

The Tentative Curriculum

The supervision training curriculum was laid out to fulfil the projected outcomes developed by CECD, DYS. Contents were scaffolded and followed a basic structure of any standard course curriculum in Supervision.

The following topics were built into the six days training:

The training was a blend of theoretical and experiential. Participants were encouraged to work in pairs, triads and groups with their case materials from the field after day three.

The training programme was evaluated using an online questionnaire and participants ranked the following six topics to be most useful and relevant. Voices of participants gathered via questionnaire are staged alongside the topics:

1. The internal supervisor

"The training was helpful not only to a counsellor or to a supervisor but to the person as who we are or who I am. From the training, I have realized that I need to improve myself a lot both professionally and personally. The aspects of internal supervisor and feedback really touched me and I really need to supervise myself internally both personally and professionally. The concept of the social web that we are the product of society shall always be taken into consideration in any interactions" (Participant).

"It was a total inward journey and an eye-opener for me at a personal and professional level" (Participant).

"Personally, I foresee putting in practice the conscious mind and the most needed self-reflection in all areas of my life. Professionally, using these new learnings in my counselling practices. Moreover, taking it further to my counsellor friends as well as staff to grow together professionally. I see myself using internal supervision to supervise my own practices which I feel have been the missing component in my profession" (Participant).

2. Attending to tasks and skills; 3. Building a relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee; 4. The concept of supervision and cultural considerations; 5. Seeking, Giving and receiving feedback and 6. Group supervision models.

To seek their views and expectations, participants were invited to render their thoughts to a set of questions at the beginning of the training. Broadly questions included: What is your understanding of supervision? What topics do you expect to be covered during the training? What can supervision add to? What are your hopes for yourself after the training? What changes do you expect to see as a result of Supervision? Additionally, prominent issues raised by participants which majorly impacted them and needed support with were burnouts, isolation, fear of failure and weighty expectations in their schools.

Contents of the training were tailored to fit participants' expectations and session discussions and role plays were built around the presenting issues.

Whilst supervision can occur in many forms and structures, such as individual supervision, group supervision, peer supervision and supervision of family counselling (Bradley et al., 2011, p. 3). Participants identified peer supervision and group supervision to be most useful and relatable. This was also the only option available in the absence of supervision structure and supervisors to provided other forms of services. Pelzom and her team from CECD, DYS facilitated the final session on day six to discuss regional (district) based supervision plans which were planned for 2019 onwards.

Supervision a Paradigm Shift; Key Observations and Highlights

"Read further on the concepts learned and seek to network for professional dialogues. Observe the internal process of self and its congruence with the choices and decisions I take. Be supervised and provide supervision" (Participant).

The quote above is from a participant and it provides a sense of the professional aspiration of the person. To aid such hopes, this section raises vital points based on the observations of the six days of training. The participant in their quote above expresses a need to further their knowledge in the field of counselling and supervision. This need was doubtless shared by all participants. Participants will benefit from having access to contemporary resources and forums to present themselves professionally. Participants shared a longing for platforms to enhance critical thinking, rationalizing their professional interventions and receiving strengths-based feedback.

Furthermore, participants held robust discussions on skills, qualities and attitudes of a good supervisor. While supervision is a delicate and highly skilled process, it is new to the participants and to Bhutan. There was a mounting concern among participants wondering who could fit the profile and if they could trust another 'senior' on the team and have confidence in their competency. A supervisor

must also be skilled and competent to deal with the 'ambiguity of the supervisory role' in Bhutan and to address power differentials and issues of confidentiality in a small country (Scharff, 2014, p. xiv).

A note of caution on standardization is overdue. One of the expected outcomes of the training from DYS was to work toward standardizing practice protocols and standards for supervision (DYS, 2018). David Murphy (2011) argued that professionalization would lead to pathologizing clients and creating inauthentic counsellors. Standardizing practices in the West changed the focus of training programs as the focus shifted from the development of the person to development of competencies and skills (p. 231). Bhutan could draw from the lessons of the West.

Most concepts including notions of "transference, counter transference and parallel process" seemed fairly new to the participants (Scharff, 2014). Mindfulness practices which advanced in the Western schools and Institutes had found its place in Bhutan. This meant that there was room to draw strongly on Buddhist principles and practices which Bhutan had in abundance. Research elsewhere (Bang & Park, 2009) indicated effective self-development activities compensated for the lack of Supervision training. Self-introspection methods are powerful self-supervision methods (Morrissette, 2002). Self-introspection methods also described as 'inner therapy' and have been found to prevent counsellor burnout (AIPC, p. 20). This evidence was compelling and exciting for Bhutan because a majority of participants felt drawn to the concept and practice of the internal supervisor (Bell, Dixon, & Kolts, 2016; Gilbert & Evans, 2000). The basis of the internal supervisor has strong resonance to the Tibetan Buddhist term *Namba* which directly translates to "insider" or "gazing inwards"(Dokhampa, 2013, p. 11). Thus, an intentional reflective space and a supervision curriculum embodying contemporary Vajrayana meditation forms or Buddhist informed ideas and practices would nourish and nurture meaningful supervision models for Bhutan. The crucial point is to create culturally sensitive professional practices that flourish communities with 'clear awareness of their own cultural worldview and value systems' (Goh et al., 2014, p. 605).

Final Thoughts on Ways Forward

The final evaluation report of the training was positive (DYS, 2018). But the plans need to go further as there was a strong desire and need for more structure and support for SGCs, the field realities stand to testify. In the absence of supervision training and professional climate, peer group supervision is a rich and viable option. Additionally, participants will benefit from constant self- reflective and development activities where the focus is on one's internal world. Everywhere the profession of counselling and the identities of counsellors are under construction (Montgomery et al., 2018). The landscape of what is best practice is shifting sands in the face of rapid changes and diverse needs. Bhutan sits on the fertile ground of rich possibilities and the time is apt to act now, Supervision is not and must not be an outlier, anymore.

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International Social Work Fieldwork:
Australian Social Work Student Placements in Nepal

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Abstract

This paper draws on my experience as an Australian Volunteer International Development (AVID) Volunteer with a social work college in Kathmandu, Nepal (2016-2018). To implement and develop fieldwork processes with local staff was the aim of this assignment. I further call on my previous experience as Fieldwork Coordinator with a Western Australian university and my supervision of two social work students, from this university, who were placed in two different Non-Government Organisations (NGO's) in Kathmandu in 2017. It is through an autoethnographic account, and review of the literature available, that I reflect on ways stakeholders can enhance student learning experiences in the host country. The value in establishing, and building on, inter-country relationships pre, during, and post, fieldwork placements is also considered. Observations in-country highlighted the importance of ensuring academic requirements are met whilst encouraging student reflection of social work in the context of Nepal. In adequately providing wrap-around support to students, the need for faculty members of both countries to share expectations and cultural and professional understandings was also identified. It is anticipated that this paper will encourage cross-cultural dialogue in the management of Australian social work placements in Nepal and support any future research in this area.

Keywords: social work, international, fieldwork, placement, students

Introduction

While I will touch on social work in both countries, the focus of my paper is the journey for the students, pre-departure, in-country and returning home.

It is acknowledged that there are a number of stakeholders involved in experiences that I will share. My recollections are influenced by subjective perceptions of a cultural context that remains unfamiliar to me.
In attempting to include the voices of others, I have drawn on anecdotal reflections from the two Australian students on placement in Nepal and former Australian and Nepali colleagues.

There have been significant changes to the social work profession with the emergence of globalisation. "Schools of social work are expanding international dimensions of the curricula with international field placements being one component of this transition" (Lenore & Lough, 2017, p.18). However, the literature suggests that a "lack of systematic oversight and coordination across social work institutions often results in poorly coordinated and ill planned placement efforts that students, host agencies, and schools struggle to navigate"(Lenore & Lough, 2017, p.18).

The college in Kathmandu supports international students on placement by linking them to organisations and a faculty member provides supervision. The exception being when I was in-country for the two Western Australian (WA) students. This was the first time the WA University had placed social work students in Nepal. During my two-year assignment, the college received eight students from Australia, a student from Columbia, Canada, and multiple student groups from India. This year, college students have embarked on fieldwork placements outside of Nepal for the first time, in India. Nepali students are typically engaged in meso-level interventions such as addressing the needs of remote communities and responding to natural disasters.

Thirty Australian universities offer undergraduate and postgraduate social work programs (Australian Council of Heads of Schools of Social Work 2016). The Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) is the accrediting National body and standards provide guidance to educators on the specific field education program requirements.

Formal social work education is relatively new to Nepal with the first academic institution opening in 1996. There are over 80 colleges including a social work subject in their curriculum. There are now four colleges offering a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW), one of which is the college where I was based, established in 2005. As with all colleges, it is affiliated to a university where there is no social work department.

According to a founding member, the challenges facing social work education and its growth and quality in Nepal include universities differing in their promotion of social work values, the absence of a national body to enforce practice standards and, due partly to social work not being recognised as a profession, students in the field are seen by organisations as volunteers rather than learners (Nikku, 2011).

Student Placements

The selection of fourth year students was based on the students' academic transcript and first placement report. The timing, as well as criteria for funding, resulted in the students fully funding their placements. Therefore, one could argue that potentially, the opportunity was afforded to those students with the financial means. Indeed, the literature suggests internationally placed students are frequently required to self-fund their placements (Mathew & Lough, 2017).

The two female students, in their 20's, had experienced one fieldwork placement in a Perth government department; one in child protection, the other, disability. While neither had visited Nepal, both had experienced time in Asia Pacific countries. The students were both of Asian descent and their physical appearance led to their reflecting on 'otherness' as they experienced comments that they looked 'Nepali'. They referred to advantages such as paying the local price for goods, however, reported that, on learning that they were foreigners, there were expectations that they could assist financially or otherwise. Opportunities for critical reflection evolved from such experiences.

Some studies suggest that students experience a lack of support when coordinating predeparture logistics, such as those dealing with finances, travel, and accommodation (Hollis, 2012, in Mathew & Lough, 2017). In addition to practical preparation, the importance of supporting students to develop a critical lens through which they may examine their experiences is also referred to in the literature (Going Places). Underpinning both is the need for all parties to clarify expectations (Mathiesen & Lager, 2007).

The students attended the university international orientation program. The gap in country-specific knowledge was addressed when I met with them on a visit to Perth. Alternatively, I suggest students connect via Skype with the fieldwork partner in the host country and/or meet with previously placed students to gain some understanding of the local context.

As I was based in country, the college faculty had limited involvement with the university staff and students' pre-departure. An example of this was my emailing accommodation options to the students. While home stay was explored, considerations included the potential burden on Nepali families despite expenses being met by the students.

The two students also stressed the need for privacy.

I suggest the 'host' college have a list of accommodation options that can be shared with students prior to their arrival to reduce any anxieties.

While the students shared that it was beneficial to have "someone who knows both worlds", one could argue that my involvement also resulted in WA colleagues not directly experiencing working with the Nepali context. For example, awareness of risk management in the local context. The College Principal in Nepal shared the challenges for her in supporting visiting international students. In particular, accommodating task focused and structured Western approaches that are in contrast to Nepali 'ways of working'. As the literature suggests, such methods taught in the West can conflict with cultural values, such as prioritising the nurturing of social relations over work-related tasks (Engstrom & Jones, 2007).

While expectations can be documented in Memorandum of Understandings, the standard agreement provided by the university did not incorporate the needs of the college. My observation of apparent gaps in support around international placements in Nepal led to my collaborating with Nepali colleagues to develop an International Fieldwork Manual. The content included clarification of roles and responsibilities and 'tips' for day-to-day living in Kathmandu. I believe the manual gave a voice to my colleagues in terms of their requirements in the exchange and encourages onus to be on the home university and students to prepare for the cultural context.

As a study of Australian students placed in India found, no amount of orientation prepared them to deal with some unexpected situations. Orientation needs to include how to deal with the most unexpected (Pawar, 2017).Preparation involves engaging students in discussions that assist them in critically examining their cultural presumptions and potential struggles with identity (Mathieson & Lager, 2007). In the year leading up to the students' arrival, I felt increasingly at ease with situations that were earlier challenges. For example, having flexibility around time. However, I continued to be mindful of my expectations being interpreted as a burden on individuals and organisations. Along with the students, I felt a sense of not wanting to step into the unknown spaces with a lens of privilege and in the role of 'expert'. Reflection is constant in international contexts and students require support to explore where they position themselves culturally and to make sense of concepts such as decolonising practice. Incorporating critical reflection in the assessment process and encouraging journaling is vital to assist students to navigate this space and central to transformative learning (Das & Anand, 2012). Transformative learning being defined as "a significant learning experience that engages the learner intellectually, emotionally and socially" (Giles, Irwin, Lynch, & Waugh, 2010, p. 7, as cited in Fox, 2017,p.497).

The Australian students had one week prior to commencing their fieldwork placements to trial the route to their placement organisation, visit a medical clinic and to meet with the Field Educators at their prospective organisations. They also attended a two-day orientation program at the college. The program included cultural and political aspects of Nepal, a language session, and 'community café' enabling students to explore social work in Nepal and Australia. A 'buddy' system was established to connect the Australian students with their local peers whilst in country. As the students found it took time to engage in work at their organisations, they reported that one week was sufficient to settle.

In selecting a fieldwork placement, the students were asked their areas of interest, however, options given were seen as benefiting the college and, in turn, social work in Nepal. The Leprosy Mission, a hospital site, was chosen as social work is not an established role in hospitals. As mental health was new to the curriculum, a community mental health organisation was selected. Both sites were Non-Government The potential for partnering local students was explored, however, timing of the semester only allowed for one male student to be placed with the Leprosy Mission for three weeks. Local students have since been placed with the Mission, however, not with the mental health organisation.

Commencing placement, the students were required to be self-directed. In the first week of her placement, the student at the hospital was unable to locate her on-site supervisor. Both students reported that they felt helpless as they did not know what they could and could not do; not wanting to impose yet wanting to contribute. As learners, the students found the role also intersected with that of 'educator'. As the staff was older and the students did not wish to be seen as 'the expert', they shared that this was often uncomfortable.

The students were encouraged to further develop their practice framework as this was their final placement. In so doing, they attempted to apply the clinical and individual centric curriculum they had been taught and apply this to local clinical settings. As a result, they discovered incongruence in the language of their profession, for example, in the case management process. What is social work? required ongoing reflection as comparisons were drawn. Studies of students from the Global North placed in the Global South suggest that classroom training did not adequately prepare them for their placements abroad (Pawar, 2017). In supporting students, Nepali on-site supervisors are unfamiliar with formalised requirements to assess whether students meet the competencies to pass fieldwork. The home university provides input into this process, however, they are located in dissimilar cultural spaces and looking at social work through different lens'.

The value of collaboratively negotiating a learning agreement with the host or-

ganisation is supported in the literature; an agreement that meets the university requirements while still being responsive to the local agency mandate (Barlow, 2007).

Due to my being in country, and my colleagues work commitments, I supervised the two students. However, it proved to be beneficial co-facilitating group supervision with my colleague. In the absence of a university representative in-country, I suggest using video conferencing to include home university faculty members in supervision sessions. The home university needs to be prepared to meet the gap in supervision approaches and not impose unrealistic expectations on the host.

Prior to the students departing Nepal, reverse culture shock was discussed in supervision. As the literature suggests, while tourists can encounter culture shock, social work students' experiences with it may be even more pronounced, as they are engaging in unfamiliar human concerns (Barlow, 2007). Guided de-briefing on return assists students to examine the emotional and professional experiences encountered. The students shared that presenting to their cohort at Consolidation, the final class prior to graduation, enabled them to begin processing their experience. While a meeting was planned with fieldwork staff, this did not eventuate due to scheduling challenges. The students suggested that this would have been beneficial if held within two weeks of their return before they went on with their lives. In addition, the students would have valued providing input into future programs by way of a formal evaluation.

International fieldwork experiences provide students the opportunity to "learn to tolerate uncertainty, unravel personal assumptions and reinterpret reality" (Das & Anand, 2014, p.111).The students, along with myself, have re-examined their practice framework to reflect the enriching learning experience in Nepal.

In establishing and maintaining relationships, expectations should be clarified and genuine reciprocal approaches adopted. An awareness of cultural nuances is essential to avoid Western models impeding the students' ability to be exposed to different ways of 'thinking' and 'knowing' in the name of efficiency. It is hoped that, as international fieldwork continues to gain popularity, further research from host countries will also contribute to the dialogue.

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Dynamics of Power Relationship and Decision Making Process in Employed Married Couples in Bhutan

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Abstract

After industrialization, globalization and liberalization, nuclear families, particularly, employed couple families have increased considerably around the world including in Bhutan. The present study aims to examine the dynamics of power and roles in employed couple families in Bhutan emphasizing on its gender role ideologies, decision making power and role of resource contribution in the process of power distribution between the couples. The study aims to explore relationship between employment status and partners' resources (educational qualification, income contribution and family role contribution) with family power in employed married couples in Bhutan. Further, the study aims at understanding the dynamics of decision making patterns and challenges. The study used cross-sectional study method with 160 employed married couples irrespective of their educational background, age and income. The samples were collected from different work sectors including government and private. The study used both self-administered and face to face interview methods. The study was carried out for the period of four months (October to December, 2018 to January, 2019). The Study found to have less relationship between resource including educational qualification and income contribution with power showing majority preferring egalitarian decision making and role distribution. Major family decision making power is found to be egalitarian irrespective of couples resource and status, but women are found to have more family decision making power in minor daily family activities. Further, the study found that women occupy equal or lower individual resource (educational qualification and income) possession compared to their male partners. Employed married couples in Bhutan prefer to establish and engage in egalitarian family power despites existence of challenges such as role strains and communication gaps.is area.

*Keywords***:** family, employed couples, power dynamics, decision making, communication, role strains, Bhutan

Introduction

While it is important to understand what constitutes or qualifies to be 'family', it is necessary to consider general societal views. To start with, Perez (1995) outlined the concept of familism as a model of social organization based on the prevalence of the family group and its well-being placed against the interests and necessities of each one of its members. The concept is deeply rooted in the social system and ever changing social dynamics. Different family theorists have proposed different definitions of family with the change of family structure and functions over times. Nijole (2015) stated that the definitions of family have important political and economic consequences, often determining family members' rights and obligations.

While it is little confounding to establish a single common understanding about family, it becomes more significant to comprehend what makes is different considering multiple dimensions of family and it's ever evolving dynamics. And more importantly, the goal is not reaching at single definition rather it is making effort to establish practical solution through exploring, internalizing and discussing the factors and characteristics of family to address issues and problems concerning family.

Since 1990, the world has made major strides in human development. The global Human Development Index (HDI) value has increased by more than a quarter and that of the least developed countries by more than half (World Human Development Report 2015, UNDP). The adult literacy rate (ages 15 and older) increased from 76 percent to 86 percent. In 2015, 72 percent of working-age (ages 15 and older) men were employed, compared with 47 percent of women. The increased education is estimated to boost female labor force participation. Therefore, family structure, process and challenges changes with the wave of socio- economic patterns. Duel earner couples are becoming increasingly common as more women and men acquire academic degrees and choose to pursue high powered careers (Martin & Maria, 2010). The trend of nuclear family (dual earner marriages or employed couple marriage) is likely to increase considerably requiring greater socio-economic and political attentions for better family wellbeing. Considering family as a primary social institution, it requires in depth understanding about its structure, functioning and needs to provide better support systems.

With the factors such as increase in literacy rate, increased labor force participation and urban migration, Bhutan has witnessed increasing number of nuclear families with employed couple marriages. The 2017 female HDI value for Bhutan is 0.576 with 0.645 for males, resulting in a GDI value of 0.893 (Human Development Index Report 2018, UNDP). Bhutan has a GII (Gender Inequality Index) value of 0.476. Female participation in the labor market is 58.0 percent compared to 74.3 for men. When there is change in family structures and perceptions due to different social factors, it requires greater and reliable studies conducted to cater to the changing needs of families. Despites very limited literature and data on the Bhutanese family, the current study attempts to explore and understand employed married couples in Bhutan relying on the theoretical understanding of family. Considering factors such as educational attainment, household labor distribution and income, the study explores the power dynamics and decision making process among employed couple families in Bhutan to address their challenges and concerning issues. The purpose of the study is therefore, to examine a sample of employed married couples to determine their perceptions of power, decision- making, gender role attitudes, division of household labor, and perceptions of marital equity in Bhutan. Further, the study attempts to understand issues and challenges faced by the couple through questionnaire and semi-structured interviews.

Method and Tools of the Study

The study adopted a cross-sectional design with mixed methods to explore the relationships among different factors interplaying in the power dynamics and decision making process among employed married couples in Bhutan. Cross-sectional study design was also used to obtain information or data at a single point in time considering the practical timeframe of the study and nature of the study. A cross-sectional design can be used in a survey, experiment, in-depth interview, or observational study (Acock & Sano, 2002). The sample frame was decided on the basis of inclusion and exclusion principle taking 160 respondents with equal representation of male and female population to obtain information from both the groups. The study used quota sampling and snowball sampling methods which are a non-random/non-probability sampling method.

Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include the respondents' views and responses collected through questionnaire and face to face interviews. Primary data are collected from selected 160 respondents. The qualitative data or further information and views form respondents were obtained through face to face interview, discussion and online interview.

Having limited Bhutanese family literature, study substantiated its secondary data or information from theories and family studies published by foreign authors. Further, relevant books, published journals and articles, news, annual reports of Bhutan, dictionary and encyclopedia related to the study area were used.

Study Instrument and Analysis

The study used a structured questionnaire and interview schedule as a tool to collect data. The structured questionnaire comprised 54 questions covering major themes such as socio-economic resources, decision making power and choices and household labor distribution between husband and wife. The interview schedule tool was used for a face to face semi-structured interview to obtain a deeper understanding about respondents' perceptions on power and decision making process in the family. Responses or perceptions which were not included in the interview schedule were recorded using different response numbers and themes. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS tool with descriptive and inferential statistics. Responses obtained from semi-structured interview were analyzed using thematic analysis**.**

Understanding family: A Theoretical Perspective on Dynamics of Power and Decision Making

Family Trend in Bhutan: A Case of Employed Married Couple Families

Bhutan has a diverse culture and traditions related to the family system and marriage. Bhutan is a mixed culture with different family structures, marriage systems and family authority systems prevailing in different parts of the country. Article 7 (Section 15), Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan states that all persons are equal before the law and are entitled to equal and effective protection of the law and shall not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, sex, language, religion, politics or other status. Family, marriage system and gender had thus not always been confined to rigid norms. The traditional family inheritance systems in Bhutan were either patrilineal or matrilineal systems. The formation and practice of particular family inheritance and structures systems were not a rigid culture and tradition to be practiced uniformly all across Bhutan, rather it relied on the community cohesion and identity and even convenience of family itself. In terms of marriage, generally, it is monogamy and a few polyandry marriage practices exist in northern nomadic tribes.

The shift of marriage from traditional arranged marriage system towards romantic and post modern marriage has marked a new dawn in marriage practices in Bhutan. The trend of employed couple marriage has increased considerably with the increase in literacy rate and job opportunities. A right to find a partner and making decision for marriage is not a sole task and right of parents anymore. It has become a sole responsibility of person deciding to marry or find a partner. A Globalized trend of socialization and communication has created a new forum to find marriage partners. As it seemed choice for many, it is also confronted with issues of balancing family and work life, power conflicts, violence, maintaining family boundary and relationship with two families of orientations, and many other tangible and intangible issues.

Bhutan has seen sharp rise in divorce rate in the recent years. In the Judiciary report of Bhutan, 2017, matrimonial case was the second highest registered case in Bhutan. Therefore, to foster better family wellbeing and exhibit roles and responsibility as primary social institution for better society, it requires substantial studies and support systems. An increasing issues of divorce, youth, elderly, child care and support, domestic violence, quality of work, balancing work and family life and many other can be perennial issue if social interventions does not focus on families.

Family power

According to Weber, "power refers to the probability that one actor (individual or group) within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his or her own will despite opposition". An extensive literature on power structure in families indicates that a family is an organized system in which activities possess a high degree of order (Shukla, 2014). Family scientists define power in terms of who is able to influence others to get their way in the family, and who is able to block others from getting their way. French and Raven (1959) have proposed a micro systemic view family power – As Legitimate power, Informational power, Referential power, Coercive power, Expert power and Reward. The power is associated with who is able to decide more or influence to get things done in family. Referring to the types of power in family, it can be also latent or manifest such as emotional, verbal and physical force. In the study on dynamics of power, Zuo & Bian (2005) focused on three forms of power: (1) one's ability to raise a suggestion, (2) one's ability to reject a suggestion when disputes arise, and (3) one's ability to make a decision with or without the consent of spouse

Now the important question is what factors determine power and who exhibits more power between husband and wife? And what are the dynamics?. Traditionally, the study of family power concentrates mainly on the household decision-making wherein researchers argue that the power is influenced by the comparative "valued resources (Mizan, 1994). Resource Theory states that greater the persons resource, greater the perceived power within the family. For instance, Fuse (1981) found out those wives who have better educational qualification with better communication skills are able to maintain better power balance and role in the family through shared decision making. Foa and Foa (1980) in their study on resource theory of social exchange has categorized resource into six groups such as love, status, information, money, goods and services. Resources exhibit their influence based on the attributes of concreteness versus symbolism and particularism versus universalism.

Referring to such attributes, we can say that a person with service resource is less likely to be influential compared to person holding love resource since service resource is concrete and universal attribute where as love is very particularistic and symbolic. Therefore, resources are commodities, materials or symbolic that can be transmitted through interpersonal behaviors. Sabatelli (2003) states that concept of reward and costs with resource are important components in social exchange to understand pattern of interaction and power. Referring to the theory of equity which is based on cost and benefit relationship, power can be related to who is gaining more benefit and who is incurring more cost in the exchange relationship. Therefore, the partner who receives more benefit in the transaction is likely to have more power over the partner.

Decision making

Decision making is vital in family sustenance and wellbeing. Various theoretical perspectives such as social exchange theory, resource theory and equity theory have been used to describe decision-making processes in marriage. Husbands and wives in dual-earner families differ in terms of influence in decision-making, gender role attitudes, amount of household labor performed and perceptions of marital equity (Bartley, Priscilla, Blanton & Gilliard, 2005).

Almosaed (2008) found that decision making power in the family increases with taking more household roles and responsibilities at home. Connecting to the resource theory concept of Foa and Foa (1980), the amount of household labor one engages is a service resource which can lead to more decision making relating in such fields.

Similarly, Zuo and Bian (2005) stated that wives' power seemed associated largely with their household role as the family manager who handled money and felt more responsible for family decision making. For instance, a wife irrespective of her qualification and income can have greater decision making power if she dominates the household roles at home.

> *A man's power in the family can no longer be justified by being himself the provider and the breadwinner, especially in the setting where the woman is working and taking part in providing for the family needs. Work has given women the opportunity to have power in the family and to take part in the household decision-making. (Almosaed, 2008).*

From the discussion, it seemed that household decision making power depends on the rate of domestic work irrespective of qualification and income level. On the other side, Bartley et al., (2005) found that the perception of equity is influenced by amount of household labor which supports that unequal distribution of household labor and decision making process increases feeling of unfairness or inequity. Therefore, it is also discernable that the amount of decision making does not necessarily lead to feeling of equity or fairness among employed married couple families.

Other factors determining the decision making in family is also traditional gendered role perception and attitudes including family background. Further, Bartley et al., (2005) found that wives who have more traditional gendered role attitudes compared to husband explained that they are willing to accept or engage in more household labor despite contributing other equivalent resources with their husband. Further, as social exchange theory and equity theory proposes, family decision making depends on many other factors such as intra and inter-personal qualities, kinship and communication skills and family norms.

Findings and Discussions

Through the process of study, researcher has been able to explore several factors and perceptions of power and decision making process relating with theoretical understanding to marital relationships. By analyzing quantitative and qualitative data, researcher concludes its findings as follows:

Influence of Educational Qualification and Income Contribution on Power and Decision Making

It is important to note that educational qualification and income are two among various socio-economic resources according to the resource theory. Resource theory and social exchange theory proposes that dependence and power are inversely related, and resources and power are positively and linearly related (Sabatelli, 2004). To relate to the current study, the influence of resource (Educational qualification and Income) on power and decision making seems less evident. Therefore, the proposition one and two of social exchange theory which are interdependence and social exchange regulated by norms like reciprocity, justice and fairness proved to be more evident in the study. Resources such as educational qualification are found to be perceived both reward or benefit for both the couples in the study. But it does not necessarily result as source of power in employed married couple relationship. Study found that although women occupy equal or lower individual resource (educational qualification and income) possession compared to their male partners, yet they are found to have better decision making power in minor daily family activities with 67% engaging in almost every time decision making although major family decision making power is found to be egalitarian irrespective of couples resource and status.

Domestic Labor Distribution, Equity and Decision Making

Female respondents were found to be engaging more in domestic work with 42.5% reported to be involved almost every day, while men represent 16%. The rest are reported to be taking turn with their spouses. Respondents' basis of agreement to do household work is found to be based on cooperation and taking turns with the spouse, followed by their ability and expertise and interest respectively. All the male respondents are found to be satisfied and fair with the current domestic role distribution whereas 5% of the female respondents have reported to be unfair with the current domestic role distribution. Despites wife or female spouse taking the major share of household chores, 95% of female respondents are found to perceive existing household labor distribution as fair. On the other note, it also appears that un-equal household labor distribution does lead to the feeling of in-equality or unfairness.

Considering the pattern of household role distribution and perception, the study found a general alignent of traditional gendered role distribution and perceptions among the employed married couples irrespective of equivalent resource and educational qualification.

On the perception of head of the family, 35% of the female respondents are found to be perceiving head of their family as their male partners whereas, 9% of the male respondents perceive head of the family as their female partners. The rest of respondents are found to perceive both. Respondents' basis of agreement to do household work is found to be based on cooperation and taking turns with the spouse followed by their ability and expertise and interest respectively.

Decision Making Power and Choice

The study found that 67% of both male and female respondents prefer to engage in mutual decision making in minor financial spending and 87% of them engage in mutual financial decision making during major financial spending or expenses. Compared to male respondents, female respondents are found to have better decision making power in supporting their family of orientation and siblings with 61% of them being able to decide on their own with fewer objections from the male partners. Both male and female respondents are found to be happy with their ability to decide on spending personal time outside the home by informing their spouse who represented 52%. Forty-four percent were found to be able to decide with some restrictions, while the rest are found to be able to decide of their own without informing their spouse.

Gender, Power and other Factors

Referring to the socio-demographic details of the respondents in the current study, women or wives are found to occupy equal or lower individual resource (educational qualification and income) possession compared to their male partners. Considering the data of women taking a greater share of household labor or chores compared to their male partners, it appears that traditional gendered role distribution and perception persist among the employed married couples in Bhutan.

Except for the difference in household labor distribution, the study perceived no other structured power difference and dominance based on gender, resource (Educational qualification & Income) and decision making frequency since 95% of the respondents indicated a fair relationship engaging in consensual decision making. The study found that intimate partner violence is less prevalent. However, 52% of the respondents are found to have experienced verbal violence from their partners quite often and 6% with emotional violence. For the primary cause of disagreement, 35% of respondents stated that it is due to poor or lack of communication and 32% due to household role strain, 5.5% due to intimacy and mistrust, and 7% due to financial issues.

Considering the higher representation in the first two factors, it indicates that effective communication plays a vital role in balancing power distribution and cost and benefits in the relationship. Household role strain has also appeared to be important factor in determining the maintenance of an equitable relationship. Therefore, fair distribution of household roles through negotiation and effective communication are found to be vital among other factors in balancing power and decision making to achieve healthy relationship among employed married couples.

Recommendation and Conclusion

While family roles, responsibilities, norms and maintenance strategies are often assumed to be natural and instinctual, increasingly cases of family and marital dysfunctions indicate a dire requirement for healthier skills and strategies within the family itself and support system from outside the family. The study suggests the need of overall social support from all the relevant social institutions to employed married couples to help them balance work and family life. There is a need to conduct family assessments and provide family support facilities such as counseling and family education while dealing with family related issues rather than individually focused intervention. The empowerment of women through higher education and employment status still needs to be promoted and encouraged for better participation in local and national level decision makings. Moreover, tertiary educational institutions need to promote studies and research related to women empowerment and gender issues.

Family life education needs to be implemented as a part of the curriculum in the schools and colleges in Bhutan to make children aware of their own family functioning, ways to deal with challenges and learning to foster family wellbeing. There is a need to accentuate and develop workable strategies to educate children on gender issues faced at local, national and international level. To achieve more egalitarian marital relationship and to overcome gender inequalities among employed married couples and others, government, higher educational institutions and related stakeholders need to establish and initiate marital enrichment programs and family related studies.

Government and private sectors need to provide provisions for employed married couples in the areas of work placements and childcare to foster quality performance in the work place. There is a requirement of better childcare support systems from both private and government sectors through the improved quality and increase in the numbers of childcare centers.

There is a need to educate younger generations on family issues, challenges through formal and non-formal education system to allow them to understand the practical issues and challenges faced in relationships and family. Parents and educators need to discuss and talk more openly about the issues of marriage and family to children to educate them about the importance of family wellbeing. It is important for parents to educate their children on gender issues and gaps. Gender education needs to be started from the family itself by involving children on practical roles and responsibilities, task at home. Parents need to point out same potentials or abilities of son or daughters through appreciating the differences and similarities of being male and female. Further, how both male and female can be more cooperative to achieve overall happiness and quality life needs to be instilled right from the family itself. There is a requirement to study and further research the Bhutanese family system, marriages, and related issues to establish a substantial family literature and data for better social intervention.

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Widowhood: Concept, Experiences and Social Work Practice

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Abstract

Widowhood is a worldwide phenomenon experience by every society. Widowhood is a status linked to the death of a spouse and is one of life's most traumatic events. Becoming widowed is a process and the most difficult and devastating life transition. It endangers the very existence of family and household. Widowhood is a transient phase when the loss of a husband is grieved, mourned, and bracketed. The widowed woman suddenly becomes the focus of attention, as both subject and object of mourning because rituals are performed on their bodies as prescribed by the cultural norms of society. Across cultures, religions, regions, class, and caste, the treatment of widows in many countries is harshly discriminatory. Widowhood rites, rituals and practices are the most dehumanising acts across societies. These practices are prevalent gender-based violence. Besides, gender based violence; widowed women's live are controlled by traditional and cultural laws. Hence, the widowed survivor often confronts emotional, psychological, economic, and/or physical problems precipitated by the spouse's death. Widowhood brings with it a multiplicity of personal, familial and societal adjustment problems. Some of these problems occur immediately and are short-lived, but other problems surface only with time and are much more difficult to resolve. In the absence of familial or protective environmental support, widowed women face a higher probability of developing mental disorders or committing suicide. Social work practice is helping practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work practice. Drawing from the theories of social sciences and humanities and traditional/indigenous knowledge, social work practices engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing (IFSW, 2014). Thus, in keeping with social work principles, there is a quest for social work intervention in the plight of widows. Therefore, the present paper will explore the concept of widowhood and discuss the unique social work intervention areas for widows.

Introduction

Widowhood is a worldwide phenomenon experience by every society. Widowhood is a status linked to the death of a spouse and is one of life's most traumatic events. Becoming widowed is the process and the most difficult and devastating life transition. It endangers the very existence of family and household. Widowhood is a transient phase when the loss of a husband is grieved, mourned, and bracketed. The widowed woman suddenly becomes the focus of attention, as both subject and object of mourning because rituals are performed on their bodies as prescribed by the cultural norms of society. Across cultures, religions, regions, class, and caste, the treatment of widows in many countries is harshly discriminatory.Widowhood rites, rituals and practices are most dehumanising acts and are gender based violence across societies. Besides, gender based violence; widowed women's live are controlled by traditional and cultural laws. Hence, the widowed survivor often confronts emotional, psychological, economic, and/or physical problems precipitated by the spouse's death. Widowhood brings with it a multiplicity of personal, familial and societal adjustment problems. In the absence of familial or protective environmental support, widowed women face a higher probability of developing mental disorders or committing suicide.

However, there is an astonishing ignorance about and lack of public concern for the suffering of widows and their families on the part of governments, the international community, and civil society, and even women's organizations (Owen, 2005). In spite of four UN World Women's Conferences (Mexico 1975, Copenhagen 1980, Nairobi 1985, and Beijing 1995) and the ratification by many countries of the 1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), widows are barely mentioned in the literature of gender and development, conflict and women, except in the context of aging (Owen, 2005). Yet the issues of widowhood cut across every one of the twelve critical areas of the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, covering women and poverty, education and training of women, women and health, violence against women, women and armed conflict, women and economy, women in power and decision-making, institutional mechanisms for women, human rights and women, women and media, women and the environment and girl child (UNWomen, 1995).

ICRC report in 2015 observes that one explanation for the neglect of this vast category of widowed women is the assumption that widows are mainly elderly women. These elderly women are looked after by families or extended relatives. However, often male members of the family or relatives are likely to be the perpetrators of the worst forms of widow abuse.. In fact, millions of widows are very young when their husbands die but may be prevented by custom from remarrying, even if they wish to do so (Owen, 2005).

But in spite of the numbers involved, little research on widows' status exists (the Indian Census of 2011 revealed 44 million widows, but very little statistical data has been collected for other developing countries). Despite a mass of anecdotal and narrative information, public policies have not developed to protect widows' rights (Owen, 2005). In India, many laws have been passed to protect women. But it is the traditional religio-cultural practices that govern property rights and widowhood practices. The present article will highlight the plight of widows among the Bodo society and implications for social work practice.

Literature Review

Understanding Widowhood

Widowhood is a status linked to the death of a spouse. Becoming widowed is the most the difficult and devastating life transition associated with losing one's spouse to death- is a process, as it "endangers the very existence of a household" (Dribe, Lundh, & Nystedt, 2007, p. 208). Widowhood is not simply about the loss of a spouse rather on the whole, a transient phase when the loss of a husband is grieved, mourned, and bracketed (Pizzetti & Manfredini, 2008; UNIFEM, 2002). Often this transition stage is subdivided into several parts, and, in the postliminal period, its extension is systematized in the form of commemorations (a week, two weeks, a month, forty days, a year, etc. (Gennepe, 1960). The process of widowhood needs to be understood as a series of events and process that occur from the time a partner falls ill until death, often at times sudden death due to numerous conditions like stroke, heart attack, conflict, burial and mourning, grieving and acceptance of loss, to the time one finds ways for moving forward in life. Thus, widowhood is a complex phenomenon. The survivors enter the transient process of widowhood through rites of separation and emerge from it through rites of reintegration into society (rites of the lifting of mourning) (Gennepe, 1960). Hence, "The survivor often confronts emotional, economic, and/or physical problems precipitated by the spouse's death (Smith & Zick, 1986, p. 619). Some of the ensuing difficulties occur immediately and are short-lived. But many other problems surface only with the passage of time and are much more difficult to resolve (Smith & Zick, 1986, p. 619).

The term widowhood brings social death to a woman. Loneliness, isolation and alienation become part of her life. Her mobility is restricted.

The comprehensive definition that this article holds is that "A widow is any women whose husband has died and has not remarried." To understand the phenomenon of widowhood, it is important to understand the various issues widows face right from the time of the death of her husband which can be divided as social, cultural, religious, economic, health and psychological challenges.

Socio- Cultural and Religious Practices Associated with Widowhood

Across cultures, religions, regions, class, and caste, the treatment of widows in many developing countries is harshly discriminatory. "The cultural and religious norms accompanied by superstition, fear and traditional resistance to cultural changes, widows seem to be complacent and women also perpetrate and perpetuate them by enforcing traditional laws and customs that infringe on the human rights of widows" (Ilika & Ilika, 2005, p. 66).

Widowhood rites and practices frequently involve dehumanising acts. Dehumanising widowhood rites and practices are prevalent gender-based violence practices extensively perpetrated against widows, among many communities (Goswami, Srikala, & Goswami, 2005; Suri,2011). Widows in India face multiple, often conflicting, social expectations. Their status is defined by a complex and diverse host of religion-based personal codes, regional, jati, kin - based customs, and government laws (Chen, 1998).

Mourning and Burial Rites

All human societies have sought ways to make death acceptable and to provide opportunities for expressing grief and showing respect to the dead person. In societies where the status of women is low, the mourning and burial rituals are inherently gendered. Rituals are used to pay tribute to the dead man, and his widow is expected to grieve and mourn. These rituals, prevalent in India as well as among many ethnic groups in Africa, aim at exalting the status of the deceased husband, and they often incorporate the most humiliating, degrading, and life-threatening practices, which effectively punish her for her husband's death (Loomba Foundation, 2015).

In Asia, specially India and Nepal "silence is a marker of grief and mourning" as narrated by Devi and Rotti (2012,p.1). Widows use sign language throughout their period of mourning, and the return to verbal speech becomes a symbolic mark of the end of mourning" (Dusart, 1995, as cited in Ramphele, 1996, p. 101).

Dress and Food Habits

In many developing countries, widows have restrictions on dress, food and lifestyles. Higher-caste Hindu widows must wear only white saree, not wear bangles, and stop eating spicy food and or the "kumkum" (the red disc on the forehead that is the badge of marriage). Across the cultures, widows are made to look unattractive and must not be sexually active.

Widow expresses her liminal status in a variety of ways depending on local customs and traditions. Her body is marked in different communities by some or all of the following practices: shaving off the head, wearing white or black dress, eating with her left hand, prohibited from participating at public ceremonies and celebrations, confined to home, venturing out only for essential emergencies accompanied and precautions taken to prevent her from polluting the unwary, wearing black or white bindi, or sati-a practice prevalent among Hindus in which widows join their dead husbands on the funeral pyre (Ramphele, 1996; Ranjan, 2001). Orthodox Hindus believe that onions, garlic, pickles, potatoes, and fish fuel sexual passions by stimulating the blood, but when one look as these foods, these are the same foods necessary to avoid malnutrition or even death (Sahoo, 2014).

Socio Challenges- Social Death

Social death

Apart from losing a husband, breadwinner and father of their children; widowhood robs women of their social status and consigns them to the very margins of society where they suffer the most extreme forms of discrimination and stigma (Owen, 2001). Hence, Widowhood represents "social death" (Owen, 2001) for women in many traditional communities of developing countries. Widowhood is described as "physically alive and socially dead" in that they are secluded and alienated from many social, religious and cultural circles and are barely visible in claiming their rights. A term associated with widowhood is inauspicious widow as a widow is blamed for bring death to her husband. Her dangerous qualities must henceforth be restrained through the imposition of severe proscriptions on her food, dress, and ritual participation (Chen, 1998). Women for Human Rights Single Women Group (2010, p.21) revealed that the plight of widows include "socio-cultural discrimination, economic deprivation and emotional crisis" (Dube, 2016). Across cultures and communities, widows are least likely to be protected by any law because their lives are likely to be determined by local and patriarchal interpretations of tradition, custom, and religion. It is as if they are in some way responsible for their husband's death and must be made to suffer for this calamity for the remainder of their lives.

The grief that many third world widows experience is not just the sadness of bereavement but the realization of the loss of their position in the family and society that, in many cases, results in their utter abandonment, destitution, and dishonor (ICRC, 2015). Yet it is widows who are often victims of rape, and many of the vernacular words for "widow" in India and

Bangladesh are pejorative and mean "prostitute," "witch," or "sorceress" (Loomba Foundation, 2015).

Economic challenges

Widows are generally the 'poorest of the poor' (Owen,1996). Many widows find themselves financially unstable soon after the death of their spouses. The main reasons for this is that in many traditional societies men are providers and women are responsible for taking care of the children at home. The position of men as providers for the family creates financial strain on widowed women because the man who was a sole and reliable source of income has died (Trivedi et al, 2008, p.38).

Disputes over inheritance and access to land for food security are common across the continents of South Asia and Africa. Widows across the spectrum of ethnic groups, faiths, regions, and educational and income position share the traumatic experience of eviction from the family home and the seizing not merely of household property but even intellectual assets such as pension and share certificates, wills, and accident insurance. "Chasing-off" or "throwing off "and "property-grabbing" from widows is often seen in the society. Patriarchal kinship systems, patrilocal marriage (where the bride goes to the husband's location), and patrilineal inheritance (where succession devolves through the male line) shore up the concept that women are "chattels" who cannot inherit and may even be regarded as part of the husband's estate to be inherited themselves (widow inheritance) (Loomba Foundation, 2015). Where matrilineal systems exist, inheritance still devolves onto the males, through the widow's brother and his sons. (Owen, 2001). Still whenever, the widow has a son, the property that a widow gets is minimum. Thus, the loss of land signifies the loss of a lifelong reliable economic base.

Emotional and psychological challenges

Widows suffer emotionally and psychologically besides socio economic factors. Berardo (1968) posited that widowhood brought along with it a multiplicity of personal and familial adjustment problems. Widows find it difficult to adjust to the new roles.

Martin-Matthews (2011, p.345) asserts that widows experience bereavement, loss and grief which contribute significantly to disturbances in the normal functioning in their lives. These terms are crucial in understanding what widows experience at an individual level. Bereavement is "what a person goes through when someone close to them dies and the state of having suffered a loss" (American Cancer Society, 2015, p.1). Loss is the severing of an attachment that offered love and security, any significant change in one's life (American Cancer Society, 2015, p.1). Another important term to understand is grief. According to Stroebe and Schut, (2010, p.275) grief encompasses:

> *the cognitive process of confronting the reality of a loss through death, of going over events that occurred before and at the time of death, and of focusing on memories and working toward detachment from (or relocating) the deceased.*

Widows expressed that experiencing loss and grief is not a once off event, but rather they experience a long term emotional process of trying to understand the loss- why and how did it happen and at the same time coping with the loss-adjusting to newer role of widow, in trying to understand the death itself and at the same time collecting their life back together and moving forward.

The whole process presents itself with many vacillations, making it hard for the widow to deal completely with the loss. Feelings of the loss swing like a pendulum from one extreme to another, and such swings batter the widow as described by Martin-Matthews (2011, p.335) as 'elevated depression' in the outcomes of the bereavement studies. Widows also suffer from various health problems because they are least likely to take care of themselves in the advent of scare resources.

Methodology

Phenomenology is concerned with the study of lived experiences from the perspective of the individual. Epistemologically, phenomenological approaches are based in a paradigm of personal knowledge and subjectivity, and emphasize the importance of personal perspective and interpretation (Lester, 1999). As such they are powerful for understanding subjective experience, gaining insights into people's motivations and actions, and cutting through the clutter of taken-for-granted assumptions and conventional wisdom (Lester, 1999). Realities are thus treated as pure 'phenomena'. As described by (Groenwald, 2003) the operative word in phenomenological research is to 'describe'. Thus, the aim of the researcher is to describe as accurately as possible the phenomenon, refraining from any pre-given framework, but remaining true to the facts.

A researcher applying phenomenology is concerned with the lived experiences of the people (Greene, 1997; Holloway, 1997; Kruger, 1988; Kvale, 1996; Maypole & Davies, 2001; Robinson & Reed, 1998) involved, or who were involved, with the issue that is being researched (Groenewal, 2004). Thus, the study adopted qualitative Phenomenological approach methodology keeping in mind the qualitative approaches to be able to discover the multiple vulnerability, mental and psychological aspects of widowed women. It seeks to get in-depth understanding of the experiences of widows and explore implications for social work practice.

The sources of data include both primary and secondary data. The secondary data include literature from books, journals, articles, and reports. The primary data is the 10 widowed women out of which three are widowed women who have remarried. In-dept interview schedule was used for primary data collection. The three married women were interviewed to understand the perception of widow remarriage in Bodo society. Besides these 10 women, family members such as siblings, parents, aunties, uncles and neighbors were also interviewed.

Results and Discussions

Mourning and burial rites:

Across cultures, mourning and burial rites are governed by traditional religious cultural practices. Among the Bodos depending upon the religious customs, mourning and burial rites differ. As narrated by women, "*Bathow fwrneya theo 13-15 din manwyw. Gwthwine atma ya no geding geding birbai thayw hwnna fwthaiyw' be din kheneao kharjw sim suwa nanag na thainai fwthaiyw. So, gamini haba hukha ao bhag lanw mwna.*" "The traditional *Bathow* religion practitioners among Bodos, is a period of mourning of 13-15 days. It is believed that the soul of the death keeps on wandering in and around the house. During these days of mourning, the family member including the widow are considered as impure. Hence, social life is suspended for all those affected by it." At the end of this period of 13-15 days, a community feast called *"kharjw" or "Shradha"* is organized. This feast marks the end of impurity and at the same time it is believed that the wandering soul leaves the house and moves on to other world. The community also has another custom of *"Hatha Baonai"* or simple *"Gwthar Janai"* . The rituals associated with it marks the end of impurity associated with death. So once a family performs the "Hatha Baonai" on the death day, the *kharjw* or *shradha* or feast given to the community can be done much later as and when the family is ready with resources.

The widow woman becomes "focus of attention, as both subject and object of mourning rituals" (Ramphele, 1996, p. 99) and as expressed by one of the respondents "*Randi hinjao khw mansefwra nwjwr hwyw. Ma ganw ma jayw swrjwng railaiyw*". She becomes the focus of attention- what she wears, what she eats, with who she talks etc.

Women are pulled between the traditional and cultural practices to meeting the immediate needs of the family like looking after the children, the aged if any, and all the household work after the death of spouse. *"I really did not have time to sit and moan his death. I have three hungry mouths to feed and an ailing mother to care for."*

So, I hopped from paddy fields to paddy fields in search of work but nobody offered me because I was supposed to be mourning and still considered impure." Widows are left alienated and the mourning rites practiced across cultures restricts her from even venturing out to find work so that she can keep the family running.

Dress and food habits

Many communities have restrictions on dress and food. As narrated by women, among the traditional bathow followers, the "kumkum" or "red mark on forehead" marks the marriage of women. So, once their husband die, the "kumkum" is removed from their forehead.

"Gannai jwnnai aotho jebw hengtha gwiya manwna dokhna yanw gwmw, gwthang, gwjaa nathai khaifha bwisw janai hinjao fwra phooja hwnw thangba gwfwr ganglangw."

"There are no restrictions on dress among the Bodo society because the traditional dress, Dokhna is colorful with yellow, green and red however older women prefer to wear white when they attend any religious festivals."

"Gannaiao jebw hengtha gwiya natai ang bedwn low ganw manwna ang rong berong ganna manseefwr nwjwr jana unfin railai bainai khow bayw"

"There are no restrictions on dress. However, I wear only the traditional bedwn made of yellow, green and red dokhna the one that is the simplest because I don't want to be focus of attention and gossip."

"Ang ganw gaswi desigkhwobw….. gwdw gwdai aru gwdan watssap, bodoland, screen touch, aronai style dokhnas…… ang delai mali thanw lwbwi randi jaba-bw"

"I wear all the designs….old traditional and newer style of dokhna like watssapp, bodolad , screen touch, aronai etc. I love to dress myself even if I am a widow"

"When widows wear colorful and the most latest designs, people look at us and comment that we are lurking men and call us prostitutes."

Traditionally among the Bodos, there are no restrictions on dress. However, many women prefer to wear the simpler ones.

The ban on spicy foods has its origins in the belief that hot flavors make a widow more lustful. The ban on food habits among the Bodos is during the time of 13-15 days mourning period. They are allowed to eat only vegetarian food. This applies to all members of the family among the Bathow followers.

Social challenges- social death

Widows face social death in many communities in developing countries. As among the Bodos, widows are inauspicious and are not allowed to be part of many traditional and cultural ceremonies. *" Randi hinjaoya mwdwmaolow thangna thayw nathai songsarni megonao jwng gwthwi sw."* Widowhood is described as "physically alive and socially dead" in that they are secluded and alienated from many social, religious and cultural circles and are barely visible in claiming their rights.

 "Jwng phooja fwrao thangnw hayw nathai phooja hwnw first janw haya. Haba hwkha ayo no nainw thang naine nemao thnagfanw haya. Bwirathi janw haya. Fungja muthe swrba bobeaoba khamaniao thnagnw nagir naiao nujaba khujatra jayw."

"Window women can participate at religious offerings to God but she cannot be the first one to offer her offerings to God, she can neither be part of the customary practice of visiting the bride and bridegroom's family, she can never be part of the traditional areca nut cutter and distributer on any marriage festivals, she is considered as an bad omen whenever anybody sees her in the morning."

"I am a widow so I cannot be the first one for any festivals or marriage parties. Most often I go late. I don't even laugh so much now least people comment she is widow and look at her laugh."Thus, the death of spouse creates conditions which compel a widow to withdraw herself from social, religious and cultural functions. Her mobility is restricted because of the number of myths associated with widowhood.

The sudden realization of loneliness and having to do everything on their own his the reality of their daily life that they have to accept. "The mourning and burial rites were over. My family members and relatives went back to their respective homes. Suddenly, I was all alone, I had to do everything alone, dropping and picking my children from school, shopping, household chores etc. the loneliness was so awful that I cried often. Often I could cry and cry in the kitchen, in the bathroom, bedroom but whenever my children came up.. I did have to show them that I am strong and smile and cheer them.. My life has to continue. I didn't move on forward as many say I have to move on… instead I moved with it …embracing all ".

The sudden change in a widowed women's life affects her so much. Widowed women narrated that they are often targets of practicing witch-craft and prostitutions.

Economic Challenges

Widows suffer the most economically when the breadwinner of the family is the husband. Bodo society follow a patriarchal system. Hence, the husband is the sole earner of the family though recent trends are changing.

 "Maje khalam na khaimainw majw jahwnw halai hafai jayw. Unao ang sanbai thayswi swr ma sanw sanwnthwngswi sana ang goi dhokhan hwnai swi."

"What do I do? What do I not do? How do I feed my family? I become anxious and stressed thinking of the societal restrictions. But society is not going to feed my family. So, I started a small shop selling areca nut."

The Bodos are an agricultural society. Land is the source of livelihood. *"Randi hinjaokhw hwkhar horw eba je ese sompothe mwn nang gow bekhowbw mwna, senanwi layw. Arw fhesasla gwiyabatho asha khwnw dakhalam kha"*.

"Widows are chased off or whatever share one is supposed to get, one wouldn't get or sometimes even if one gets...properties are grabbed. And when a widow does not have a son, do not expect a property share"

Often illiterate and with no skill, employment opportunities become limited for the widow. With no access to land and property, widows and their children suffer the cycle of poverty. With societal restrictions, many are even denied work for a daily wage in the paddy fields.

Emotional and Psychological Challenges

As expressed by Trivedi and others have also noted that a great majority of widows experience mental illness such a mood swings, depression, anxiety and are suicidal.

"Maa yaa thab thab nw raga jwngra jabai jebw jayababw, danw gabw danw miniyw ekhonba thwinw swi nama bw bung lai langw ."

"My mom gets angry often for no valid reasons, she cries suddenly and laughs suddenly. Sometimes she even says I am going to die"

"My mother has attempted committing suicide twice. But by god grace she didn't die. From then my grandmother started living with us to take care of me, my two twin sisters and my mother."

The social support system decreases with no male backing behind. *"Raobw nwngnw sob somai sohai hwnw haya. Awrw randi hinjao a lai majw sukho fin gwn hwnna bw raobo hephajab hwya."* "Nobody offers you help nor nobody is willing to offer you help. They fear that widow women in not is a position to repay you back the help one offered."

Many expressed *"sonsarni nem khanthe baide songsar jabwbai awrw jalang nang gwn."* We have lived our lives and played the roles prescribed by the norms of our society.

"Ang geegra jabai. Makhwo and manw geeyw ang homnw haya" . " I have started fearing but I don't know what I fear and why I fear."

Many expressed emotional disturbances such as feeling sad, bereavement, despair, fear, shame, vicictimization, anger, and then the whole societal attitude towards widows makes them vulnerable.

Different Coping Mechanism

Many expressed their coping mechanism. Believe in the supreme being that God is there to provide them their needs. For many children were the greatest strength for survival. As expressed; *Fheesa fwrni thakhwinw thangna tha nang seegwn*."I have to live for my children". Many had peer groups supporting them and members of these peer groups were often widows themselves. They could visit each other whenever possible and call up each other every evening. A closer analysis of the experience shared shows that the immediate environment plays an important role in coping with the loss. The immediate environments include families, extended relatives, neighbourhood, community associated with many traditional, religious and cultural practices. Thus, when one had support of the extended support system, they were able to cope better.

But very often, many widows also do not have support system. In such cases widows increase their susceptibility to depression.

Remarriage – An option?

Widow re-marriage is accepted in the Bodo society. However, many prefer not to remarry. They choose not to remarry, citing reasons like having to look after the children from the earlier marriage, social attitude to remarriage, the loss of claim to property, if any, from earlier husband and more importantly they do not want to go through unwanted experiences associated with remarriage. There are also chances that a man who may agree to marry a widow may also have a number of drawbacks such as widower having children, ill health, have older parents to look after etc. The norms for remarriage differ from society to society. Widowhood is a transient phase. Widows expressed that widowhood can be looked at transient phase of life because one ceases to be a widow if she re-marries back. Widow remarriage is accepted among the Bodo society: *"I was a young widow with a daughter. I was still healing or recovering from the shock of my husband's death at the same time struggling with my day to day activities. I had no source of income. I need to keep the family running. My husband's best friend asked my hand for my marriage. My in-laws and my family agreed. I got married just after seven months of my husband's death."*

Many see remarriage as an option to move on in their lives. *"Remarriage took away from me the socio-cultural bindings of widowhood."* However, many people still pass on comments.

When a husband dies not many people speak of widow remarriage. But when a wife dies whether the husband is with or without children, remarriage is often a topic of discussion such he should get married because he has children. And he needs someone to look after him. But when it comes to the widow, the topic of discussion is often, she has children, she cannot remarry another husband. Thus, the societal attitude towards re-marriage is gendered.

Theoretical Framework to Understanding Widowhood

Radical feminist: Radical Feminist theorists (such as Andrea Dworkin and Catherine MacKinnon (1987)) centre their argument on male power as central to social relations arguing that sexism is a palpable factor in repressing women (Lord, et al., 2012:18). Radical feminists maintain that women are the most oppressed group and that this oppression is deep, cuts across races, cultures, economic classes and results in acute suffering of women in particular (Lord, et al., 2012:18). In their argument, these theorists assert that men in patriarchal societies control norms and structures used by society to control women and there is need to speak against such structures and change them for the advancement of women in all societies.

The experience of widows explains that patriarchy has inherently shaped the Bodo society. Hence, these has manifested in gendered customary rituals making widows powerless and hopeless: Many shared that "*Mathw khalamnw hanw sonsarni neem khanthiyanw bednwba*." "*What else can we do? The norms of the society are already there.*" The oppression and subjugation of women is inherent in patriarchy and it has been manifested in the different institutions of the society. The patriarchal norms has been accepted and been part of the lives of the community which is actually a structurally gendered inequality. *"Jwng najao nangow jayw" "We have to accept it"*. To add substance to the researcher's view, Lewis (2015, p.1), agrees that subjugation of women is inherent in patriarchy and has been accepted in the daily lives of the people. Women are themselves perpetrators because women themselves have internalized some of these customary rituals and have made mandatory for other women to follow. Widows find it hard and inappropriate culturally, to stand up on their own against their massive repression from the community.

The radical feminist theory is appropriate in trying to understand widowhood and shaping methodologies for social work intervention of widows.

Implications for social work practice: Social work practice is a helping practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work practice.

Drawing from the theories of social sciences and humanities and traditional/indigenous knowledge, social work practices engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing (IFSW, 2014). Social work has devoted maximum effort towards ameliorating human suffering and reducing conditions and circumstances that bring unhappiness to humanity through professional interventions. For Crompto, Gaaway, & Cournover, 2005 intervention in social work is understood to make meaningful changes to the lives of clients. Compton et al., (2005, p. 6) enlist and assert that the purposes of social work are:

1. To enhance the problem-solving, coping, and developmental capabili ties of people;

2. To promote the effective and human operation of systems that provide people with resources and services; and

3. To link people with systems that provide them with resources, ser vices, and opportunities.

For social workers' intervention to be appropriate and meaningful, it is further argued that the approach ought to be adapted to the needs, difficulties, desires and ambitions related to the problems of people by considering life transition issues, the milieu and "obstacles that impede successful accomplishment of transitional and environmental tasks" (Compton et al., 2005, p. 7).

Widowhood is one of the social problems that have risen to epidemic levels in Bodo society. The problems of widowhood among Bodo society are dire and require a gender sensitive, dedicated professional and empowering approach if interventions have to bear meaning for the adversely affected widows. The social, economic, emotional and psychosocial problems associated with widowhood are very intense and bring a sense of alienation, powerlessness and hopelessness to widows. It has also been observed that social institutions uphold the gendered rituals. In these circumstances, there is a need for suitable approaches to address their challenges. Hence, the approach of social work intervention with widows has to include both micro (individual, domestic unit, or group) and macro interventions (organization, community, or policy).

Social Justice Perspectives

Social justice is described as the value of social work upon which the foundation of the profession is built (DuBois & Miley, 2014, p.135 cited in Dube, 2016). A value refers to "the regard that something is held to deserve, the importance or preciousness of something" (Beckett & Maynard, 2005, p. 6). Values in social work guide what social workers do. In this regard, social justice is regarded as of primary importance and beholden to the profession such that it should be embraced by practitioners to guide their professional conduct. This is significant in social work interventions in widows' challenges as justice is less experienced in their psycho-social predicaments. To indicate the importance of social justice to the profession of social work, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) place social justice as a "practice imperative" (DuBois & Miley, 2014, p.155). The social workers' ethical code also mandates social workers to promote and commit themselves to social justice.

Whilst there is no agreement among authors on the definition of social justice, a common feature is that social justice centres on the fairness doctrine and principle. Some useful and relevant definitions of social justice are provided by Robinson and the National Pro Bono Resource Centre. Robinson (2015, p.1) sees social justice as:

"promoting a just society by challenging injustice and valuing diversity." Social justice exists when all people share a common humanity and therefore a right to equitable treatment, and a fair allocation of community resources such as fair redistribution of resources, equal access to opportunities, fair system of law and due process,   and protection of vulnerable and disadvantaged people.

Strength Based Perspectives

The strengths perspective has also operational principles which guide the practitioners' actions in assisting their clients. Kondrat (2010, p.40) provides a summary of the guiding principles of the strengths perspective which are:

1. Every individual, group, family and community has strengths.

2. Trauma, abuse, illness and struggle may be injurious, but they may also be sources of challenge and opportunity.

3. Assume that you do not know the upper limits of the capacity to grow and change and take individual, group, and community aspirations seriously.

4. We best serve our clients by collaborating with them.

5. Every environment is full of resources.

6. Caring, caretaking, and context-care is essential to human wellbeing.

The most significant helping philosophy in social work practice using the strengths perspective is that social workers need to work collaboratively with their clients (Kondrat, 2010, p. 40). Thus, upholding the social work principles, social justice, human rights, collective responsibility, social policy and advocacy and strength based perspectives; there is a quest for social work intervention in the plight of widows.

Micro level interventions can include bereavement counseling, crisis management, child care services, and starting up income generating activities. Messo level interventions can include group therapy's, peer support groups both for support system and income generating activities, family counseling, and family group counseling. While macro level interventions can include creating awareness and sensitization programs at the community, forming collectives and advocating for changing cultural and religious practices and policy changes.

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Community Volunteerism among Youth-Led Groups Under Young Bhutan Network, Bhutan

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Abstract

Young Bhutan Network was formed under Department of Youths and Sports to streamline the functions of youth-led groups in Bhutan through proper coordination and networking. Using the Social Exchange theory as a framework, this study seeks to understand the reasons, needs and benefits for youth volunteers participating in volunteerism and examine the variables that predict their participation. One hundred fifty volunteers from six youth-led groups, sampled using proportionate stratified random sampling, were interviewed in a self-administered questionnaire. The Pearson Correlation shows strong linear relationship between participation and need (r=.671, p=0.01), followed by reason to volunteer (r=.643, p=0.01), and the perceived benefit (r=.620, p=0.01) of volunteering. Multiple linear regression analysis indicates "benefit" (p=.000) as the strongest predictor for volunteering, followed by "need" (p=.001). However, the "reason" (p=.304) do not significantly contribute in predicting volunteerism.R2is 0.520 indicating needs, benefits and reasons to volunteer influence predicted 52% of the youth participation in community volunteerism. In assessing the relationship between social responsibility and volunteerism, the positive correlation result indicates positive effects. Finally, the thematic analysis of volunteers' perceived benefits and expectations of Young Bhutan Network attest the importance of such institutions on youth-led groups to foster community volunteerism.

Keywords: benefits, needs, participation, social responsibility, volunteering, Young Bhutan Network

Introduction

Volunteerism in Bhutan is deeply rooted in its traditional belief systems. It is a community practice where it follows the principle of self-reliance, community participation and social cohesion through community voluntary activities (Choden, 2003). The traditional community volunteerism enabled active youth engagement in building societal leadership, meeting and socializing with others (Chuki, 2017). Such interactive participation improved the level of trust among members of the community which is a prerequisite of a harmonious society (Kinga, 2008). The concept of modern volunteerism and social responsibility among Bhutanese youth groups according to Choden (2003) is a continuation of traditional Bhutanese ways of helping each other. Present volunteer organizations could draw lessons from the traditional self-help mechanisms to build a sustainable and humane society based on the values of interdependence and peaceful coexistence (Chuki, 2017).

Bhutan has a young population with about 31% of the population between the age bars of 13 to 24 years old. Youth constitute a unique group in our society (Department of Youth and Sports, 2011), representing a positive force with enormous potential to contribute to development (Department of Youth and Sports, 2010). In order to provide them with opportunities to grow, develop and prosper as fully engaged, responsive, and productive citizens, the Royal Government of Bhutan has always accorded a high importance to the youth. Moreover, to engage them in meaningful and productive activities many youth-led groups have evolved over the years (Department of Youth and Sports, 2017). Young Bhutan Network under Department of Youth and Sports of Ministry of Education brings together youth-led groups to cooperate, collaborate, and consolidate the community voluntary activities carried out by different youth groups. There were eight youth-led groups registered with Young Bhutan Network as of October, 2018. They are, All for One, One for All (A11A), Druk Adolescents' Initiative on Sexual Awareness Network (DAISAN), Youth Peer Education Network (YPEER), Young Volunteers in Action (Y-VIA), Generation Y-Youth, Community Based Scout (CBS), Bhutan Sharing and Loving Youth (BSLY), and RIM Zhenphen Tshogpa.

In light of the growing interest among the youth in volunteerism, studies to understand their participation in volunteerism are necessary. King, Nichols and King (1999) asserted that people in different countries have different perceptions of volunteering, differing with cultures, political climate, government policy and history. Thus, the first part of current study examines benefits, needs, and reasons of the youth in volunteerism. Studies have posited both positive and negative relationship between volunteerism and social responsibility.

Therefore, the second part of the study attempts to assess the relationship between volunteerism and social responsibility among youth volunteers. The third part of the study seeks to gather perceptions and opinions of youth volunteers about the Young Bhutan Network.

Literature Review

Definition of Volunteer and Volunteerism

There is no single universally accepted definition for volunteers and volunteerism. However, according to Adler (2011 cited in Hamzah et al, 2016) volunteers are individuals who allot a part of their time to help community members without being materially rewarded; they assume responsibility for voluntary activity, seeking personal satisfaction and acquisition of new experiences. "The terms volunteering, volunteerism and voluntary activities refer to a wide range of activities … undertaken of free will, for the general public good and where monetary reward is not the principal motivating factor" (United Nations & United Nations Volunteers, 2016).

Benefits of Volunteering

The Social Exchange theory describes six types of social rewards: personal attraction, social acceptance, social approval, instrumental services, respect/prestige, and compliance/power (Blau, 1964). In the context of volunteering, rewards can take the form of experience, satisfaction from the service, appreciation of the beneficiary, and overall sense of positive feelings. Youth have different motives and benefits from taking part in volunteering activities (Smith et al., 2010). The decision to volunteer is based on a rational weighing of its costs and benefits (Wilson, 2000). Among multiple benefits of volunteering as discussed in numerous studies, personal skill development, sense of civic responsibility, career choice and employability are some of the benefits of volunteerism (Hall, McKeown, Roberts, & Canada, 2001). It is also asserted (Holdsworth & Quinn, 2010) that instrumental motives and benefits such as those relating to career development are considered very important as they help in building their personal capital. Some studies identified volunteering programmes that maximize benefits to the youth volunteers. Some of these are ones that provide opportunities for youth autonomy and decision-making, collaborative work with youth and adults, reflection, psychological engagement, and building competence, confidence, character, connection and caring attitudes (Stukas, Gil Clary, & Snyder, 1999). Studies also found that, irrespective of age, volunteering does have positive benefits on physical and psychological well-being of the volunteers (Van, 2000).

Researchers have grouped benefits of volunteerism into three categories: material, solidary, and purposive. Materials include tangible rewards associated with monetary value. Solidary are intangible benefits of social rewards such as recognition and respect from others that one gains as a result of one's service. Purposive benefits are also intangible benefits that a volunteer reaps as they strive to fulfils organizational or group's goals (Clark & Wilson, 1961). In order to encourage and sustain volunteerism, the benefits should be maximised and the costs minimized where the volunteers experience as a result of their participation (Chinman & Wandersman, 1999).

Need to Volunteer

According to the Social Exchange Theory, the need to volunteer is motivated by self-interest. Self-interest and interdependence are central properties of social exchange (Lawler & Thye, 1999). These basic forms of interaction among volunteers happen when they have something of value to each other in volunteering activities, and they have to decide whether to exchange and in what amounts (Lawler, 2001). The concepts of individualism are used to explain exchange processes. To humans, the meaning of individual self-interest is a combination of economic and psychological needs (as cited in Ekeh, 1974). According to Michael (1981), in social exchange, self-interest is not a negative thing as one perceives. When individual's self-interest is recognized, it guides and reinforces interpersonal relationships for the advancement of both parties' self-interest. Thus, the volunteerism inspired by self-interest will help in fulfilling the economic and psychological needs of the volunteers.

Volunteering can also contribute in enhancement of social capital (Wollebaek & Selle, 2002) and human capital (McNamara & Gonzales, 2011) like knowledge, skills, abilities, leadership opportunities and work experience. These serve as a pathway to employment through increases in one's social capital and human capital. Studies consistently indicate strong correlations between social capital and the tendency to volunteer (Wilson, 2000), underpinning the importance of social capital in sustenance of the vigor for volunteerism among youth.

Reasons to Volunteer

Many studies have investigated the reasons as to why people volunteer and what motivates people to volunteer. The reasons for volunteering vary depending on the type of voluntary services, targeted beneficiaries, and the context of volunteerism based on local cultures, political climate, government policy and history (Hamzah et al., 2014). This is because helping and benefiting others have been the central factors amongst volunteers of all ages (Brudney, 2016).

Motivational factors are the reasons behind volunteering that encourage large numbers of people to come forward to contribute voluntary services in community. Yeung (2004) identified different motivations such as altruism, social contact, personal interest, and emotional needs as some of the reasons for people's involvement in volunteer activities. Among these motives, youth volunteering is especially associated with sharpening one's job skills, gaining work experiences, building a resume, and building good rapport with others which increases the probability of employment opportunities for those unemployed volunteers. Student volunteers are primarily driven by the motive to help someone in their communities, to learn new skills, to respond to needs or skills, and to gain experiences that are advantageous for their future careers (Smith et al., 2010).

Relationship between Volunteerism and Social Responsibility

Social responsibility is the obligation of individuals or entities to be supportive of the society in which they live. It is a return of support one gets from society. There is an existence of reciprocal benefits if we do it correctly. It encompasses a broad topic that covers the idea of moral duties that people have in society. Haynes (n.d) argues that, there are many things we must do to be socially responsible, including being considerate of others and acting to improve the overall wellbeing of the society.

Social responsibility is an ethical framework and suggests that an entity, be it an organisation or individual, has an obligation to act for the benefit of the society at large ("Social responsibility," n.d.). It is an ethical theory, in which individual volunteers and youth-led volunteer groups in context of this study are accountable for fulfilling their civic duty; their actions and activities must benefit the community and whole of society at large ("Social Responsibility and Ethics | Who Is Responsible And Why?," n.d.).

It also refers to identifying oneself with the community or society, and helping and caring for people (Scales, Blyth, Berkas, & Kielsmeier, 2000). The studies have posited that, social responsibility is likely to be the basis for volunteering, as well as paid work (Cheung, Wing Lo, & Liu, 2014). Putnam (2000 as cited in Harraka, 2002) further supports that high levels of volunteer activity promote a general sense of responsibility, strengthen social bonds, and contribute to a healthy society.

Methodology

Methods and samples

The study sampled 215 (*n*) youth volunteers of six youth-led groups of the Young Bhutan Network out of about 430 (*N*) registered active members, using Proportionate Stratified Random Sampling method with sampling fraction of ½. This method according to Milton and Arnold (2003) has an advantage of narrowing the differences between different types of individuals through classification. It also becomes conducive to extract representative samples from the group and reduce the sample size. A total of 150 (70% response rate) youth volunteers from six youth-led groups took part in an online survey using self-administered questionnaires.

Measurement tools

In assessing the relationship between participation in volunteering activities and benefits, needs and reasons, twenty seven elements were rated in a five point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). The questionnaires were adapted and modified form of tools used by Hamzah et al, (2016) for a similar study carried out in Malaysia. In determining the relationship between social responsibility and volunteerism, nineteen elements were rated in a five point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). The questionnaires were adapted from a similar studies done by other authors (Callero et al, 1987; Omota et al, 2000; Grootaert & van Bastelaer, 2002).

The data were tabulated and analyzed using Microsoft excel and IBM SPSS version 25.0. Statistical tests such as Descriptive analysis, Correlation and Regression analysis were done. Qualitative data were analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step thematic analysis framework (data, generate initial codes, research for themes, review themes, define themes, and write-up).

Results and Discussions

Relationship between Participation and Benefits, Needs and Reasons

Bivariate correlation (Pearson's r)

The relationships between participation and benefit, need and reason were analysed using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients. Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure that there were no violations of the assumptions of normality and linearity.

As shown below (Table 1), according to Cohen (2013), the strongest linear relationship was found to exist between participation and needs to volunteer (r =0.672, p = 0.01). The positive correlation coefficient of 0.672 indicates the score of frequency for participation and the rating of needs to participate in volunteering activities. This means that the stronger the needs to get involved in volunteering activities, the higher the frequency of participation in volunteering activities in last six months. For example, the respondents' needs to volunteer include the need to encourage sharing among communities, feeling sense of accomplishments by doing something useful in the community, and taking part in voluntary programs is a responsible act towards the development of the country.

The second highest relationship was found between participation and reasons for volunteers (r= 0.643, p = 0.01) and the correlation coefficient indicate that there is a strong positive linear relationship between participation and reasons for volunteers. The result shows that the stronger the reasons of volunteering, the higher the participations. The reasons for voluntary activities reported by the respondents included improving employability, help support corporate responsibility, support the government development policies, and create social network of trust and cooperation.

Finally, the relationship was found between participation and the perceived benefits of volunteering (r = 0.620, p=0.01) and a value of 0.620 indicates a positive linear relationship. Examples of the perceived benefits from taking part in volunteering activities among the respondents included improving leadership skills, molding good values, increase social capital, and enhance sense of belonging.

Table 1
Correlation between Participation and Benefits, Needs and Reasons

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Participation	16.000	2.903	1			
2. Benefits	4.053	0.970	.620**	1		
3. Needs	4.103	0.809	0.671**	0.627**	1	
4. Reasons	4.035	.0819	0.643**	0.659**	0.855**	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Regression analysis on predictors of participation in volunteerism

The data were further analysed using a multiple regression analysis to identify the factors which influence participation in volunteering activities. These factors included "benefit", "need" and "reason". This regression analysis showed the relationship between participation (dependent variable) and benefits, needs and reasons (independent variables). The analysis was checked at confidence level of 95% and the 150 samples are used through primary data collection to study the relationship between variables.

As depicted in Table 2, the correlation coefficient (R) is 0.720 indicating presence of a positive correlation between independent (needs, benefits and reasons) and dependent (participation) variables. The coefficient of determination R^2 is 0.520 indicating that the participation in volunteerism is influenced 52% by three determinants, needs, benefits and reasons to volunteer.

The results point towards existence of a positive relationship between participation and reasons, needs and benefits. The analysis shows that benefits (p=.000) form the strongest predictor for the participation, followed by the needs variable (p=.001). However, the reasons (p=.304) do not contribute significantly in predicting the participation. The result shows that higher benefits from volunteering are likely to increase youth participation in that activity over the needs and reasons to volunteer.

Table 2
Predictors of Participation in Volunteerism

Factors	Unstandard-ized Coeffi-cientsBeta	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients-Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	5.028	0.896		5.609	0.000
Benefits	0.911	0.231	0.304	3.941	0.000
Reasons	0.424	0.411	0.120	1.032	0.304
Needs	1.357	0.402	0.378	3.380	0.001

Dependent Variable: Participation
Independent Variable: Benefits, Reasons, Needs
R=.726, R^2=.520, F=52.674, P=.000

Relationship between Participation (Volunteerism) and Social Responsibility

The following table shows the Pearson correlation between participation and social responsibility, perceived volunteer cost, and volunteer identity. The results indicate that there is a significant positive correlation between participation in volunteer activities and social responsibility of the volunteers (r=.515, p=0.01). Element of social responsibilities of respondents such as helping each other, care for the unfortunate individuals in society, and being a part of community one lives in were rated in a five point Likert scale ranging from

Strongly agree (5) to Strongly disagree (1). Volunteer identity (r=.481, p=0.01) also indicates positive linear relationship with participation in volunteering activities. Volunteer identity were measured based on respondents' rating on elements such as volunteering is important part of who I am, being volunteer means more than just volunteering, and I would feel a loss if I were forced to give up volunteering. However, the volunteer cost does not seems to have significant correlation with participation in volunteering activities (r=.023, p=0.01). Volunteer cost includes volunteering is emotionally draining, time consuming, disappointing, physically tiring, frustrating, depressing, and easy.

Table 3

Correlation between Participation and Social Responsibility

	1	2	3	4
1. Participation	1			
2. Social responsibility	.515**	1		
3. Volunteer cost	0.023	0.041	1	
4. Volunteer identity	0.481**	0.487**	0.168*	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Perceptions on Young Bhutan Network (YBN)

Perceived Benefits of YBN on Youth-Led Groups

The thematic analysis of the YBN on youth-led groups showed the perceived benefits were myriad. The volunteers felt that YBN acts as its parent organisation. It creates various platforms to bring different youth groups together for discussion on pressing youth and community issues. This helps in brainstorming ways and means to address the issues with practical solutions. Being a registered youth-led group of formal organisation like YBN gives authenticity and authority to plan and implement community volunteerism and social services. The Young Bhutan Network facilitates network development among youth groups and stakeholders in the society. Such networks reportedly helped the youth groups in garnering financial and technical assistance from various government, non-government and private organisations. YBN also encourages collaboration among youth groups and other organisations. Following the formation of YBN, some of the evident collaborative programs of youth-led groups include tree plantation on social forestry day, organizing and participating in youth festival, organizing cleaning campaigns, fundraising for social cause among others.

YBN through its platform enhances relations among youth participants and youth groups at large. It is one way of empowering the youth while facilitating a common platform to exchange ideas and opinions of different youth groups on issues related to youth and community volunteerism. Uniting the diverse youth groups, it helps consolidate social capitals such as team building, networking, relationship, interaction, trust, leadership skills, and communication skills (Baum & Ziersch, 2003).

Expectations from YBN

The most common expectation expressed by the youth volunteers was to form a YBN board with representatives from the youth-led groups. They felt the YBN board would help coordinate and plan programs related to youth and community volunteerism. Allocation of seed funds for the registered youth groups would enable them to carry out their planned activities. Trainings on leadership and capacity building for youth leaders were also expected by the youth volunteers. Respondents also desired an increased frequency of coordination meetings among youth-led groups for further collaboration. This would not only help in making greater impacts in the community, but would also be resource and cost-efficient together. They expect YBN to organise more programs like the youth festival with various programs that engages the youth in many ways.

As the majority of the respondents are in high schools and colleges, they recommend YBN to organize entrepreneurship programs in summer and winter breaks to encourage more youth to take up entrepreneurship careers. This, according to them would be real youth empowerment. Acknowledging the importance and effectiveness of YBN for youth-led groups, the participants recommend it take the focus further to remote Dzongkhags where there are many similar youth-led groups.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Community volunteerism among youth-led groups is growing rapidly both in terms of numbers and impacts in the society. Thus, it calls for support and guidance of relevant stakeholders through understanding the underlying reasons, needs and benefits for the volunteers. As indicated by this study, there is a positive relationship between youth participation in volunteering and reasons, needs and benefits. Among these factors of volunteerism, the perceived benefits of volunteering forms the strongest predictor followed by the need to volunteer. There also seems to be strong positive relationship between volunteerism and social responsibility among volunteers. With increase in sense of social responsibilities, the tendency to benefit community and society at large through volunteerism seemingly increases. The perception study showed that while youth volunteers acknowledge the support of YBN, they expects it to do more to bring together different youth-led groups and streamline its functions to diversify the type of volunteering services they provide to the society. Therefore, relevant stakeholders are expected to continue supporting and creating a conducive environment for youth volunteers through leadership trainings, capacity development and financial assistance. This will further encourage youth volunteers in making greater impacts in the community through volunteerism. However, in-depth empirical studies on similar subjects need to be done to understand underlying factors of youth participation in community volunteerism and encourage more youth volunteerism.

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The Roles of Social Work Profession in Bhutanese Context

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to understand the social work professional. The meaning of social work education and practices in Bhutanese culture presented here is based on the roles of understanding social work as profession. What is the purpose of social worker profession? What are their tasks? Where do they perform these tasks? Also, this paper will provide an important contribution to social workers. The concept of social work education is implemented in line with Bhutanese values and cultures. My research paper is based on a research methodology. The facts and findings were accomplished through questionnaires. This study will be informed by the students of the Certificate Course in Social Work and enhance their profession. If social workers themselves are used as instrument to render assistance to others, it implies that, their profession must possess certain expertise and knowledge to approach people in need. It is also probably the social work practitioner's uncertainty regarding their skill that gives rise to the aforementioned course and professional development. It will guide the society into a new dimension, and also identify the impact of social workers refreshing their training.

Keywords: social work education, role of social workers, profession
            and volunteerism

Introduction

It can be argued that social service is inherent in every individual's mind and it is a phenomena aligned to an individual's happiness. According to Khentruel Rinpoche, "social work services is rendering help in the community through charity and showering volunteerism services for needy ones."

Social work has been developing in the world for many countries from the earliest period of time. People have been implementing positively to build up strong foundation on social work values. In Bhutan, the social work profession seems to have started from past decades of years.

Bhutanese were mostly associated with generosity of giving alms to others. This value of culture has been since our forefather's time and continues to the present. The main roles of social workers are to ensure helping individuals, families, groups and communities to enhance their individual and collective well-being; but it is also their responsibility to look after the problems of societies. Therefore, education and training is important because it is a fundamental preparatory process for the social practitioners.

Generally, the social work profession in Bhutan was born in the early 1990s with the existence of Non-Government Organization under the Royal command of His Majesty 4th King of Bhutan, King Jigme Singye Wangchuk. In this stage, the Royal Society for Protection of Nature (RSPN) was initiated in 1987, the Youth Development Fund in 1988, and Tarayana Foundation in 2003. In 2007, the Civil Society Organization was granted the legal opportunity to register and operate under the enactment of Civil Society Organization Act of 2007" (Dorji, p. 16). Therefore, social work took place across the society with a range of people from the elderly to small or different races of people. All of them have their own perception on social work. Some people love doing social services and they do volunteer work to help other in the society. It will influence their action and day to day behaviour. Some people participate in understanding the social work profession and reflect on their actual behaviour.

The major task of this research paper is to find out how to assess the social work profession and how to tackle down the social problem in Bhutan by social workers in Bhutanese context. This research studies the importance of social work based on Bhutanese culture. The main part of this work is to create a foundation on which to carryout research and important decisions into the future.

Objectives of the study

This research paper will be mainly focusing on understanding the roles of the social work profession. Therefore, it attempts to find out the roles of social workers. However, the main purposes in this paper is to assess how Bhutanese social workers have been influenced in their work place and within their situation.

1. Assess the roles of social workers profession development
2. Analyse the roles of social workers profession and their situation.

Methodology

Research Design

In this study, research methodology approach was chosen. Exploratory or formative studies are taken up in order to achieve ideas on the topics. This research paper mainly talks about the role of the Social Work profession in the Bhutanese context and how the Certificate course in Social Work has been benefited the Civil Society Organization, Monastic Institution, Social work practitioners, educator and other employers.

Participations

The research was carried out with different groups, including the participants from Certificate in Social Work students, Monastic Institution, and educators and other employers. I have framed the research questionnaire, and sent the soft copies to their personal email. The target population for the study was 100% but out of 41only a few responded from the participator of social work course. To the data collection it was difficult as few numbers have shown interest in answering the data paper.

Data Collection

The data was collected using various methods and tools.

i. **Primary data**
   It was collected through standardized structured questionnaire and personal interviews.
a. **Structured questionnaires**
   The standardized questionnaires were designed and sent to the participants through email to the respondents. The questionnaires were simple with open-ended questions relating to research objectives.
b. **Personal interviews**
   The questions were open-ended questions to support data collection. Interviews were held with a small number of Educators, Civil Society Organization and Monastic Institution.
ii. **Secondary data**
   In this study, I have provided a review of the literature. The finding from the study will be discussed. The lists of all the sources are listed in the references.

Literature Review

"Social work is a practiced-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the employment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge. Social work engages people and structure to address life challenges, and enhance wellbeing" (The Global Definition of Social Work was approved by International Federation of Social Work (IFSW) in July 2014).

"The main features of social work profession's focus on the individual and groups of well-being of the society" (Reichert1). A primary mission of the social work profession is to enhanced human well-being and helps to meet all their basic human needs, attending particularly to the needs and empowerment of those who are vulnerable oppressed, and living in poverty" (Reichert2).

"The Bhutanese societies have been always hooked up by the concepts of words "Jimba" as a high level of virtuous action which makes sense to giving away our possessions without expecting anything from them in return. It has been influenced by customarily of Bhutanese activities which implemented in the mind, and doing an act of empathy that comes purely from one's own mind without any enforcement and without any expectation of profit or gain from the act" (Choden, 2003, p. 3).

Social Work Education in Bhutan

It was pointed out in 2017 that, "Bhutan has no social work programme to date offered in any institution at any level. The Royal University of Bhutan offers some courses related to management and education. This is the only University in the entire country, which has affiliated colleges. Professional social work is an unexplored area in Bhutan. The workers in agencies and the civil societies call themselves social workers but they are not trained as professional social workers. To undertake social work education one has to travel to either West or India" (Rajendra et al., 2017).

Voluntary work and rendering services to people in need are important components to strengthen the profession, which helps to contribute to social changes in contemporary world. Social workers will be playing vital roles in the field, providing social care and changes to ensure the betterment of society. And it also develops the social relationships with communities and with groups of people, which helps to enhance well-being and individual happiness.

However, there was no social work education in Bhutan. To date, Civil Society Organization members have a tended to look after the social issues. The inception of social work profession has been discussed to understanding social education. Nowadays, socials issues are growing such as teenage pregnancy, suicide, rape, accidents, drug addiction, smuggling substances and youth issues. Thus it's important for the social worker to be well trained in the field to deal with a different range of people with different methods and knowledge.

Thus, the Samtse College of Education thought to start a Bachelors of Arts in Social Work starting from July 2019. Samtse College of Education launched the Certificate Course in Social work in two phases. I attended the first cohort training from 22nd -26th January 2018, and training two from 2nd -6th July 2018. In addition, the second cohort training started from 2nd -6th July 2018, and training two started from 22nd -26th January 2019. A total 41 numbers of participation from Civil Society Organization, Government officials and others educators were trained in these courses. The certificate course came out to be a successful one as the participants gained lot of knowledge by attending the course which helped them to improve their skill in handling the cases. As a result it also improved their organization and the participation skills. Also, participants learned through assignments.
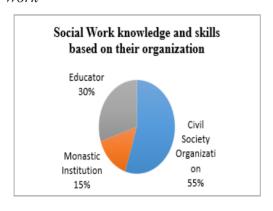
Data Analysis

The data obtained from questionnaires was analyse using Microsoft excel. This study uses the pie charts, and graphs. On the other hand, secondary data were obtained from using qualitative interviews and research data were collected in the form of explanation and understanding of profession.

Results and Discussions

The learning about the social work profession were quite difficult in theory rather than doing practical placements due to the lack of social work education in Bhutan. Those who are working in CSO and NGO are also not well trained in the field, thus to have an organized system in their organization they need to have a course where they are well trained. According to the survey I have done, Civil Society Organization was represented by 55% which have the knowledge on social work. The 15% were from Monastic body where they were having the idea of being kind and generosity (Jimba) according to the Buddhist perspective. The remaining 30% were based on the educators like parents, teacher and councillor.

Figure 1

Showing the Numbers of Institution and their Knowledge Percentage on Social Work

Source: Field Data (Figure 1)Figure 2: Nos. of Student's participator in CCSW

This study reports on the view of the students of social work as they are the recipient of the social work training from Samtse College of Education. A total of 41 students were awarded the Certificate in Social Work.

This study found out that the Certificate in Social Work students were equipped with knowledge and skill with the help of the training. The major knowledge they acquired from the training included: the meaning of social work, method of social work, teaching skills, group work, presentation skills, organization skills at individual working place, project planning and project assignment writing. These skills are essential for every social worker to ensure services are effective.

In Bhutan, culture and social values were influenced by word of Buddhism. Both traditional area and new fields are considered from a variety of perspectives including cultural orientation. The social work profession needs clear information to update to current social problems. The Buddhism and social services are interlinked to each other with the practices of Buddhism people get motivated to help others in order to gain good karma. His Holiness the Daila Lama, during his teaching emphasized that; "we should not harm others even our enemy rather we have to help them." Most of the people practice compassion and help others. With the practices of generosity (Jimba), people tend to benefit from others, for example by providing free clothes and food to the elderly people.
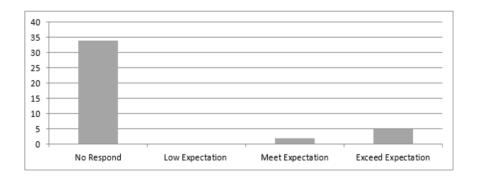
As one of the respondent said, Buddhism also played a pivotal role in setting an example about how people should behave. Therefore, the social work must be based not only on human rights, but also on compassion and wisdom. It is mentioned that the social work profession is deeply engaged in balanced and harmonic ways with Buddhism philosophies, where, it will express their values with present-day society. The programme coordinator, Dr. Ganeshman Gurung, mentioned that "social work has been the most profound intangible culture and practice deeply rooted in our Buddhist tradition" (p 5-6).

According to Engelbrecht "The social work profession is built on a basic philosophy that is fundamentally based on a particular view of humanity and life" (1999, p. 29).One of the respondent mentioned that it is important profession of social work to connect with all types of new approaches to areas of studies. Quality is the only important factor of social work education. Good communication skill and friendly academic atmosphere in social work training institution will ensure the quality of students.

Enhanced their Social Work Profession

I had marked the expectation rate from: exceed expectations, to meeting expectations, low expectations and also no responded from participants. From the study it is clear that 17% of students enhanced their profession and fulfilled their expectation from the training.

Figure 3
Showing Numbers of Students Enhanced their Social Work Profession

One of the participants said that "it was very useful considering the fact of the environment that I am currently working, it is a huge institute where almost a thousand students or youths come for learning from around hundreds of staff. So, with more people present, there are also several issues and challenges to cater for. Hence, the work of social workers comes into play. The knowledge and skills learned from the training has developed them to confront those issues and challenges faced by the Bhutanese students. It has also helped them to become competent enough to bring positive changes in the community.

As another participant mentioned, "I expected to gain knowledge such as how to deal with people and how to help persons who are in need, and also gained confident to deal with numbers of peoples". Reichert (2007) mentioned that "social work profession is always run with the human rights ranging from welfare services to the profession."

The study also revealed that the primary motivations for training were to carry out more social work services and get enlightened with all the skills and knowledge needed to confront all the challenges while doing social services activities. One of participant said that, "it made me to do more to spur me with all energies to face challenges along the road of social services. I got an opportunity to meet up with inspiring people who are doing and have done amazing services to the community, and also enhanced my profession too".

According to Tashi (2004, p. 493) "We can contribute to the achievement of happiness by developing the attitude of helping others." Therefore, social workers helped people who cope with challenges in every stage of lives. They helped with wide range of situation such as social services assistance, child care, health care, youth advocacy, child and women protection, waste management and important on natural environment. For instance, Bhutan Kidney Foundation has done advocacy programme on kidney related diseases through prevention programme, funded with support from the European Union in Delhi and HELVETAS Swiss Inter-cooperation Bhutan. It had covered almost five Dzongkhag to provide awareness and access to their services.

Conclusions

For social workers, the work has to be able to contribute to social development in Bhutan. Therefore, social work education and profession will deliver different type of planning to renders services at different stages. This study attempted to show that the course will enhance social workers, their profession skill and knowledge. It is also importance to understand that participation in social work will increase the ability to work professionally with a variety of clients. To fully appreciate in their profession, it is also important to gain the sense of their responsibilities in the societies.

Limitations and Recommendations

- ✓ The major limitation of this research was lack of resources and the lack of previous research on social work education in Bhutan. However, in reality there are always limitations.
- ✓ Social work education should develop systemic organization and extend the profession.
- ✓ In the coming years, if Samtse College could again provide a certificate course (Diploma) in social work as it would benefit those who are working in CSOs and NGOs.
- ✓ And even the students who undertook the certificate may be interested in doing the Bachelor of Arts in Social Work as the course will enhance their ability to gain a better job.

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Participants' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of the Certificate Course in Social Work Training – SCE Approach

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Abstract

With the transition of political, economic and social scenario in Bhutan, the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) have been expanding over the years. Bhutan has more than forty registered CSOs and the numbers are still growing. However the paucity of trained social workers in Bhutan has been a pressing issue. Absence of a social work training institute in Bhutan has compelled the CSOs to recruit employees with varying degrees. To address some of these issues, Samtse College of Education (SCE) of the Royal University of Bhutan (RUB) recently trained two cohorts (45 participants), which was delivered in two phases (Training I and Training II) with each phase containing four modules. This study on the effectiveness of the certificate course in social workSCE Approach was conducted with 30 participants to either validate its effectiveness, encouraging the social workers to pursue such courses or offer avenues to look for plausible alternatives. The study pursued a mixed mode of research methodology employing questionnaires and interviews. For data collection, a survey questionnaire was administered via email. Semi structured interview was also carried out to gain an in-depth view and perception of the participants. The study revealed positive perceptions of the participants who shared their satisfaction over the relevancy and usefulness of the training. Some of the recommendations include a need to introduce diploma, degree and masters courses in social work besides the need to introduce professional development programme in social work for social work practitioners.

Keywords: social workers, civil society organisation, certificate course, assessment

Introduction

Anchored on the College's philosophical vision of right view, right contemplation or understanding and right action leading to right fruition, the Certificate Course in Social Work aimed to prepare the social work professionals whose knowledge, skills and values would be guided by the wisdom of the act of beneficence and generosity. Guided by this timeless wisdom of helping others, volunteerism has always been at the heart of Bhutanese cultural ethos and everyday life, especially in the villages. Service for others is one of Bhutanese society's most profound intangible cultures that influence social relationships, the values of help and reciprocity, community vitality, and sustainable wellbeing and happiness.

Social work has always been a part of Bhutanese culture. The civil society in Bhutan existed long before we knew what civil society actually meant although the concept of formalized civil society emerged only in the late 1980s (Dorji, 2017). The Royal Patronage in the form of *Kidu* has always benefited Bhutanese citizens since the time of the first King of Bhutan. The monastic community, since ancestral times, had been rendering countless services to communities in times of health or sickness and disaster or prosperity. The formalization of such social service groups started gradually and in 2007 the national parliament passed the Civil Society Act in order to regulate civil society development in Bhutan.

Most social workers in Bhutan work with registered CSOs. Some of them have been working with various CSOs for more than a decade, without professional trainings and academic preparation. Choden (2018) observes that most social workers in Bhutan had different educational backgrounds mismatching the current field requirement. Onyiko et al (2017) contends that if the social workers are made professionally ready then there won't be "gaps in the social development" of the nation (p. 86).The need for knowledge, skills and abilities in Bhutan has become an imperative for a social worker to perform professionally and effectively.

Therefore, the introduction of the certificate course in social work was intended to provide participants with knowledge, skills and insights required to be efficient social work professionals. It was offered with technical support from the UNICEF. Two cohorts comprising 45 participants from Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and government offices and educators received the training. The training was provided in two phases (Training I and Training II) with each phase running five days.

In between the two trainings, a period of six months, the participants were also assigned with small projects to bring about a social change in their work settings. The first phase of the training began in January 2018.

Training I entailed contents drawn from four broad areas of social work education such as foundational knowledge, methods in social work, communication and interpersonal skills for social work, and specialised disciplines regarding social work. Training II included sessions on developing Bodichitta mind, self-care and stress management in social work, communication for development, social work and financial sustainability, project cycle management and participatory planning and development.

The study was conducted to review the relevance and usefulness of the course. The perceptions of the participants on the effectiveness of the course to social work practitioners was sought to validate the relevance and usefulness of the course.

Figure 1

SCE Approach

A mixed mode of research methodology employing questionnaires and interviews was used. It was carried out through a sample of 30 participants from two cohorts. The quantitative data was assembled through administering a questionnaire to the participants via e-mail.

To administer the interview, the researcher adopted a semi-structured interview design because it offered a structured flexibility. The data analysis of the questionnaire was done by tabulating standard deviation and mean from all the items in the questionnaire. The data assembled through the interview was analysed using thematic analysis.

The major findings of the study included: participants' positive perception on the relevancy and usefulness of the training, their positive comments on the course content and the delivery, especially the sessions on Mindfulness Practice, Developing Bodichitta Mind, Self-care and Stress Management and Project Cycle Management. Some of the recommendations include a need to introduce Professional Development (PD) programmes for social work practitioners in Bhutan, introduction of courses like diploma, degree and masters to upgrade the qualification and professional competency of social workers in Bhutan.

Literature Review

Evolution of CSOs in Bhutan

The civil society in Bhutan existed long before we knew what civil society actually meant although the concept of formalized civil society emerged only in the late 1980s (Dorji, 2017). According to Chuki (2017), traditional agrarian Bhutanese society relied on locally available self-help mechanisms to address various societal challenges as there were none of the registered civil society organisations (CSOs) which exist today. People relied on naturally formed systems that were based on local needs at the grassroots level in the rural villages in a traditional society.

Social work has always been a part of Bhutanese culture. When someone passes away in the family, everyone in the neighbourhood gathered bringing food supplies, kitchen utensils and beddings enough for twenty one days. The neighbours performed the household chores, the monks performed the rituals and elderlies consoled the family in grief. Similarly, when someone in the village built a house, everyone gathered for support without expecting anything in return (Pek-Dorji, 2017). *Tshogpas* (groups), formed for multiple purposes, had benefited almost all the citizens at varied points of time.

But most of these *Tshogpas* were not formalized and essentially belonged to the era of De-facto Civil Society in which "isolated rural communities evolved and practiced self-help mechanism to cater to individual and community needs for economic and spiritual well-being" (Dorji, 2017, para. 3).

Need for Professional Competence in Social Work

It is of overriding importance for CSOs to either recruit trained social workers or to provide necessary training to them. "Education and training is important because it is the preparatory phase for social work practice" (Onyiko, Nzau and Ngendo 2017, p.86) in order to develop personal potential and stimulate professionally important abilities (Minzhanov, Ertysbaeva, Abdakimova, Pirmagambet & Ishanov, 2016). Social workers need to be competent. They need to be prepared for varied challenges which they will face. Onyiko et al (2017) contend that if the social workers are made professionally ready then there won't be "gaps in the social development" of the nation (p.86). A single professionally competent social worker possesses the potential to bring about countless positive changes in the society.

Many of the Bhutanese social workers have been working with varied CSOs for more than a decade, without professional trainings and academic preparation. Choden (2018) observes that most social workers in Bhutan had different educational background mismatching the current field requirement. She contends that most social workers receive an on the job training experience, which of course plays a predominant role in advocating positive social changes. However, pursuing a social work career without any professional training and experience may entail several risks. For example, paucity of legal knowledge has been a major stumbling block for most social workers in Bhutan.

Methodology

The study pursued a mixed mode of research methodology employing questionnaires and interviews. According to Ponce and Pagan-Maldonado (2014) "a mixed method study is research intentionally combining or integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches as components of the research (p. 113).

Research Instruments

The quantitative data was collected through administering questionnaire to the participants via e-mail. Questionnaire was used to assess the learning satisfaction of the participants who received the training. To administer the interview, a semi-structured interview design was adopted as it offers a structured flexibility.

Data Collection Procedure

The research was carried out through a sample of 30 participants from the two cohorts of social workers who received the training. Of the 30 participants, 19 (63.3 %) were male and 11 (36. %) were female as shown in table 1.

Table1

Demographic Characteristic of the Participants.

	Frequency	**Percent**
Male	19	63.3
Female	11	36.7
Total	30	100.0

The quantitative data was assembled through administering a question-naire to the participants. Questionnaires were developed to check participants' satisfaction level. Researcher developed 16 items using a five point Likert scale (very high satisfaction 5, high satisfaction 4, moderate 3, low satisfaction 2, very low satisfaction 1).

To administer the interview, the researcher adopted a semi-structured interview design as it offers a structured flexibility. The semi-structured interview design was employed to conduct individual interviews with the participants.

Data Analysis Procedures

The research was carried out through a sample of 30 participants from the two cohorts of social workers who received the training. Of the 30 participants, 19 (63.3 %) were male and 11 (36. %) were female as shown in table 2.

Table 2

Demographic Characteristic of the Participants

	Frequency	**Percent**
Male	19	63.3
Female	11	36.7
Total	30	100.0

The quantitative data was assembled through administering questionnaire to the participants. Questionnaires were developed to check participants' satisfaction level. The researcher developed 42 items using a five point Likert scale (very high satisfaction 5, high satisfaction 4, moderate 3, low satisfaction 2, very low satisfaction 1) and (Strongly agree SA, Agree A, Neutral N, Disagree D and Strongly disagree SD).

3.3 Data Analysis Procedures

The data analysis of the questionnaire was done by tabulating standard deviation and mean from all the items in the questionnaire. The total average mean and standard deviation are also computed and presented through a graphical presentation. The data assembled through the interview was analysed using thematic analysis. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Ver.21 was used to analysis the descriptive statistics results besides Microsoft Excel version 2013 to generate results in the form of graphs and tables.

The learning achievement index had a Cronbach alpha of 0.846. The content of Training I and Training II was developed to find out the effectiveness of the training. The Cronbach alpha for the content of Training I was 0.907 and Training II was 0.888.

Table 3

Reliability Test

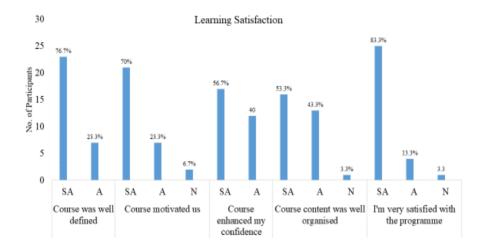| Index	No. of items	Reliability*
Learning achievements	16	0.846
Content of Training I	12	0.907
Content of Training II	13	0.888

*Chronbach alpha

Results and Discussion

Upon analyzing the interviews, qualitative responses and quantitative data generated, five major themes which are discussed below.

Learning Satisfaction

The study revealed the training as highly satisfying. The participants expressed their profound satisfaction on the training offered by the college.

Figure 2

Participants' Perception on the Learning from the Training

The figure 2 above shows that around 96.7% of the participants are very satisfied with the learning from the training. The majority of the participants expressed that the "course was clearly defined" (100%), "course motivated them" (93.3%), "course enhanced their confidence" (96.7%), and the "course was well organised" (96.7%). A small section of the participants (3.3%) remained neutral, which also indicates that there areas that need improvement.

One of the participants (P1) said, "The training was indeed full package of knowledge, skills and strategies that would lead oneself, community and country as a whole in fulfilment of our profound philosophy of GNH".

Similarly, another (P2) shared that the knowledge and skills gained from the training boosted his/her confidence and self-esteem as a social work practitioner resulting in a better job satisfaction.

The table 4 below shows the overall mean and the standard deviation of survey questionnaire rated by the participants. The average mean score of all the three parts of the questionnaires which consisted of a total of 42 statements,

each rated out of 5 is 4.6 and the standard deviation is 0.53. The data reveals the consistency in the rating among the participants. It also reflects the high level of satisfaction derived by the all the participants.

Table 4

Illustration of the Overall Mean, Standard Deviation, and Participants' Level of Opinions towards the Training Offered by the College

Sl. No.	Areas of Assessment	Overall Mean	Overall Standard Deviation (SD)	Level of Opinion
1.	Overall learning Assessment (17 statements)	4.6	0.5	Strongly Agree
2.	Course Content : Training I (12 statements)	4.5	0.6	Highly Satisfied
3	Course Content : Training I (13 statements)	4.7	0.5	Highly Satisfied

Relevancy and Usefulness of the Training

When asked about the relevancy and usefulness of the training, majority of the participants (83%) expressed that the training was very relevant, useful and well organised.The sessions on Mindfulness Practice, Developing Bodichitta Mind, Self-care and Stress Management in Social Work and Project Cycle Management were found very unique and enriching, which they shared have enhanced their professional competency. Many (53.3%) of them stated that with the gained knowledge and skills, they are now able to use appropriate intervention and take right decisions in their work place. One of the participants (P3) stated, *"I had a wonderful training and now I could do thing more professionally"*.

Some of the participants expressed their concern of Bhutanese social workers most of whom are not trained professionals. A participant (P4) said, *"Majority of our social workers are not trained but they have been providing their services as social work professionals.*

I think it's high time that we have professionals in the field of social work" another (P5) shared, "What we do is social work and we are finally being certified as social workers." According to Onyiko et al (2017), social workers need to be professionally ready in-order to reduce the gaps in social development. Professionally trained social workers possess the ability to bring about number of positive changes in the society.

The overall analysis from the questionnaire on the course content revealed that 86% to 96% of the participants rated "Highly Satisfied" with the course content offered in two phases of the training as shown in Table 5 below. The perceptions shared by majority of the participants confirm the relevancy and usefulness of the training.

Table 5

Summary of Participants Perceptions on Course Content of Training I and II

Sl. No.	Course Content: Training I	Mean	SD	Rating	%
1	Introduction to Mindfulness Practice	4.5	0.5	Highly Satisfied	90
2	Introduction to Social Work	4.7	0.4	Highly Satisfied	94
3	Human Behaviour and Development	4.8	0.4	Highly Satisfied	96
4	Introduction to Buddhism and Social work	4.3	0.7	Highly Satisfied	86
5	Working with Individuals and Family	4.5	0.6	Highly Satisfied	90
6	Working with Special groups	4.5	0.6	Highly Satisfied	90
7	Introduction to social policy	4.6	0.6	Highly Satisfied	92
8	Integrating social work practice methods	4.4	0.6	Highly Satisfied	88
9	Communication and Interpersonal Skills	4.6	0.6	Highly Satisfied	92
10	Working with Marginalized Communities	4.3	0.7	Highly Satisfied	86
11	NGO/CSO administration and management	4.5	0.6	Highly Satisfied	90
12	Assignment Planning, support and assessment	4.4	0.6	Highly Satisfied	

Sl. No.	Course Content: Training II	Mean	SD	Rating	%
1	Introduction to mindfulness practice and its relevance to social work	4.7	0.5	Highly Satisfied	94
2	Seminar - Assignment Presentations	4.3	0.6	Highly Satisfied	86
3	Participatory planning and development	4.6	0.5	Highly Satisfied	92
4	Project Cycle Management	4.6	0.5	Highly Satisfied	92
5	Developing Bodichitta Mind, Self-care and Stress Management in Social Work.	4.7	0.4	Highly Satisfied	94
6	C4D for Social and Behaviour Change	4.4	0.6	Highly Satisfied	88
7	Role of Social Workers in Communication and Advocacy – A Case of Tarayana Foundation	4.6	0.6	Highly Satisfied	92
8	Advocacy for Bringing about Social Change – A Case of Bhutan Toilet Organisation	4.7	0.5	Highly Satisfied	94
9	Working with Communities/Stakeholders – A Case of Forest Products Based Project in Eastern Bhutan.	4.4	0.6	Highly Satisfied	88
10	Health Policy and Social Service	4.5	0.5	Highly Satisfied	90
11	Social Work and Financial Sustainability - Developing Grant Proposals	4.8	0.4	Highly Satisfied	96
12	Advocating for Women and Children's Issues	4.6	0.5	Highly Satisfied	92
13	Social Work in Action – A Case of Bhutan Sharing and Loving Youth	4.6	0.5	Highly Satisfied	92

Trainers and Training Design

Figure 3

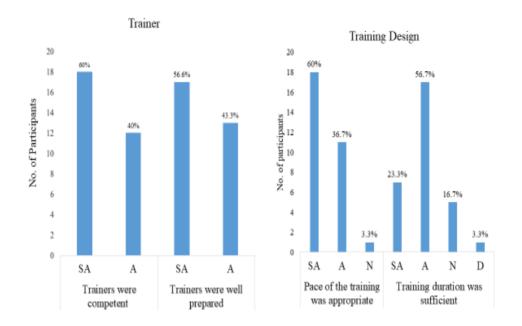*Participants' Perception on Trainers and Training Design*

Figure 3 above shows that all the participants have rated 'strongly agree' and 'agree' for 'facilitators being well trained and well prepared'. Similarly, more than 90% of the participants rated 'strongly agree' or 'agree' for the appropriateness of the pace and time allotted for the training. However, there were around 20% of them who either remained neutral or disagreed with the pace and time allotted for the training.

These ratings of the participants indicate that the facilitators were qualified and experienced professionals although there were some reservations with regard to pace and the time allotted for the training. Many of them have expressed their profound liking of SCE approach; unique aspects such as sessions on Mindfulness Practice, Developing Bodichitta Mind, Self-care and Stress Management in Social Work and the course being delivered by qualified and experienced professionals/ academics engaged in teaching, research, administration, and other work in social work settings both from within and outside the country as shown in figure 3 below.

Changes in their Practice as a Result of the Training

Many of the Bhutanese social workers have been working with varied CSOs for more than a decade, without professional trainings and academic preparation. Therefore, one of the learning outcomes of the training was to enable the participants to work efficiently with individuals (children, women, elderly and persons with disabilities) and groups such as families and communities who need support and intervention of social work practitioners.

"In my three years stay at the Bhutan Cancer Society, I haven't met with anyone who has any degree or background in social work. Through this course, I have gained a lot of knowledge and skills", said one of the participants (P6). Similarly, around 80% of the participants stated that the training enhanced their competency to handle bigger project, design programmes that suits different target groups and apply different strategies and interventions in their own social work settings.

Areas for Improvement

While all the participants stated that the training was very relevant, useful and well organised, they also shared that certain aspects of the training could be improved to make it more efficient and relevant. Duration of the training being very short was one of the aspects that majority of the participants pointed out. They also shared that although the training was very relevant and useful, it was more theoretical, with less discussions and practical sessions. Therefore, there is a need to increase the duration and make it more interactive and practical.

Recommendation

Social workers need to be competent and prepared for varied challenges which they ought to face, ultimately. The finding also shows that most social workers in Bhutan have different educational background, mismatching their current field requirement.

As such, we recommend some of the approaches through which we can make our social workers professionally competent to bring about positive changes in our society. The following are some of the recommendations:

- There is a need to introduce a diploma and degree course in Social Work in Bhutan for social work practitioners. Although SCE is launching a BA in Social Work from Autumn Semester, 2019, it is offered to high school graduates and not to in-service candidates.

- The study revealed that many of the social work practitioners are asping to upgrade their qualification and professional competency through diplma, degree or master courses in social work. Therefore, the college should expand the programme and provide opportunity to in-service social work practitioners to pursue diploma, degree or master courses in social work in the near future.

- The college may offer PD programme on different themes to meet the professional need of employees in government, CSOs, and other stakeholders whose work require knowledge and skills of social work. Today, due to the absence of a social work training institute in Bhutan, CSOs are compelled to recruit employees with varying degrees although we know that pursuing a social work career without any professional training and experience entail several risk.

- The college may think of branding/promoting social work courses that SCE is launching from July 2019 to the local, national and international community, which is unique in the region and the world because of some its distinctive features such as contents on mindfulness practice, developing Bodhichitta mind in social work, self-care and stress management in social work and two field practicum each for a duration of 6 months.

Conclusion

The study revealed positive perceptions on the effectiveness of the training offered by SCE. It was found to be very relevant, useful and enriching. The sessions on mindfulness practice, Developing Bodichitta Mind, Self-care and Stress Management and Project Cycle Management were found most relevant and useful to Bhutanese context that deepened their knowledge, skills and competencies of social work. Further, the study revealed that through this training, participants had developed the professional ethics and values besides gaining knowledge and skills.

The finding showed that most social workers in Bhutan have different educational backgrounds, mismatching their current field requirement. Therefore, there is an urgency to introduce professional development programmes (PD) for social work practitioners to enhance their competency and bring about countless positive changes in the society.

Besides PD programmes, there is a need to introduce diploma, degree and masters course in social work to address the challenges faced by the contemporary society.

For example, the paucity of legal knowledge has been a major stumbling block for most social workers in Bhutan.

However, there are also limitations that need to be considered while developing the programmes. One major problem is the availability of competent trainers. Although SCE organised the training with technical support from UNICEF, around 70% of the trainers were from other institutes within the country and outside. Around 40% of them were from institutes within the country and the rest 30% were from outside, majority from India. Overall, the training was found very relevant indicating SCE to organise such trainings or PD programme in future.

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Conference Schedule

Day I: May 2ⁿᵈ, 2019 - Friday

Venue: Namgay Khanzang, SCE

Time	Programme
1530 – 1630 Hours	Registration of participants.
1700 – 1715 Hours	Participants and guests seated in the hall.
1715 – 1730 Hours	Arrival of the Guest of Honour His Excellency, Dr. Lotey Tshering, The Prime Minister of Bhutan.
1730 – 1740 Hours	Marchang ceremony.
1740 – 1800 Hours	Welcome address - Rinchen Dorji, President, SCE.
1800 – 1810 Hours	Overview of the conference - Kinley, Dean of Research and Industrial Linkages, SCE.
1810 – 1820 Hours	UNICEF collaboration with SCE - Juliette Haenni, OIC Representative UNICEF
1820 – 1850 Hours	Opening of the conference and keynote address - Guest of Honour.
1850 – 1900 Hours	Vote of thanks - Karma Utha, Dean of Academic Affairs, SCE.
1900 – 1920 Hours	Photo session with the Guest of Honour.
1930 Hours	Conference opening dinner.

Plenary Session

Day II: May 2ⁿᵈ, 2019 - Friday

Venue: Namgay Khangzang

Session I	
Time	**Programme**
0855 Hours	Participants seated in the hall.
0900 – 0905 Hours	Introduction to the session and introduction of the keynote speakers – *Karma Gayphel and Dorji Yangzom, SCE .*
0910 – 0940 Hours	Keynote address I Contemporary challenges to social work education in South Asia – *Cathy Humphreys, University of Melbourne, Australia.*

0945 – 1015 Hours	Keynote address II The global social work definition and the social work statement of ethical principles: Towards a decolonized ethics – *Vishanthie Sewpaul, University of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa.*
1015 – 1035 Hours	*Question and answer session.*
1035 – 1045 Hours	*Wrap up of the session - Karma Gayphel and Dorji Yangzom, SCE.*
1045 – 1115 Hours	*Tea break*

Note: *Following tea, there will be a parallel sessions of presentations across the two venues viz. Namgay Khangzang (Auditorium) and Rigpa Hall (Main Academic Building).*

Paper Presentation

Day II: May 3ʳᵈ, 2019 - Saturday

Venue: Namgay Khangzang

Session II	
Time	**Programme**
	Session Chair: Mohamed Naeem, Programme Specialist, UNICEF Maldives.
1120 -1125 Hours	*Opening remarks – Session chair*
1130 – 1145 Hours	The Presence of Death, Loss and Grief when Supporting Others: A Reflection on Grief and Loss Counselling when the Counsellor is Dealing with those Issues in their Personal Life – *Karen Anderson, Edit Cowan University, Perth, Australia.*
1150– 1205 Hours	Is the International Practice of Family Group Conferences Relevant to Bhutan? – *Paul Ban, University of Melbourne, Australia.*
1205 – 1225 Hours	*Question and answer session.*
1225 – 1230 Hours	*Wrap up of the session – Session chair.*
1230 – 1400 Hours	***Traditional lunch and live cultural performance***

Session III	
Time	**Programme**
	Session Chair: Bibharani Swargiary, Assam Don Bosco University, Guwahati, India.
1405 -1410 Hours	*Opening remarks - Session chair*
1415 – 1430 Hours	The Right to be Listened to: Acknowledging the Child's Voice in Family Court Processes – Vicki Banham, Edith Cowan University, Perth, Australia.
1435 – 1450 Hours	Design Thinking as an Empathetic Approach to Improving Social Service: The Kolkata Patient Referral Experience from Bhutan – Yeshey Khandu, MoHLR, Thimphu.
1455 – 1510 Hours	Reproductive Health Rights and Social Work – *Prateeti Barman, Assam Royal Global University, India.*
1510 – 1530 Hours	*Question and answer session.*
1530 – 1540 Hours	*Wrap up of the session – Session chair.*
1540 -1610 Hours	*Tea break*
1615 Hours	***Visit to a Local Community***
Venue Coordinator - Tashi Gyeltshen, SCE; and Rapporteur - Kuenzang Gyeltshen, SCE.	

Paper Presentation

Day II: May 3rd, 2019 - Saturday

Venue: Rigpa Hall

Session II	
Time	**Programme**
	Session Chair: Kendra Gregson, Regional Child Protection Adviser, UNICEF ROSA.
1120-1125 Hours	*Opening Remarks - Session chair*
1130 – 1145 Hours	Pioneering Supervision training for school guidance counsellors in Bhutan: reflections and lessons for the field – *Sonam Pelden, Edith Cowan University, Perth, Australia.*
1150– 1205 Hours	kNOwVAWdata: Improving National and Regional Capacities to Measure and Monitor Violence against Women in Asia and the Pacific – *Kristin Diemer, University of Melbouene, Australia.*

1205 – 1225 Hours	*Question and answer session.*
1225 – 1230 Hours	*Wrap up of the session – Session chair*
1230 – 1400 Hours	***Traditional lunch and live cultural performance***
Session III	
Time	**Programme**
	Session Chair: Settasak Akanimart, Child Protection Specilaist, UNICEF ROSA.
1405 -1410 Hours	*Opening remarks – Session chair*
1415 – 1430 Hours	International Social Work Fieldwork: Australian Social Work Student Placements in Nepal – *Natalie Long, Curtin University, Australia.*
1435 – 1450 Hours	Social Work and Palliative Care: Understanding Chronic Sorrow – *Karen Anderson, Edith Cowan University, Perth, Australia.*
1455 – 1510 Hours	An Alternative Model of Social Work Education: A Case of SCE -Ganeshman Gurung, SCE.
1510 – 1530 Hours	*Question and answer session.*
1530 – 1540 Hours	*Wrap up of the session – Session chair.*
1540 -1610 Hours	*Tea break*
1615 Hours	***Visit to a Local Community***
Venue Coordinator - Sonam Daker, SCE; and Rapporteur - Yangdon, SCE.	

Plenary Session

Day III: May 4th, 2019 - Sunday

Venue: Namgay Khangzang

Session I	
Time	**Programme**
0855 Hours	Participants seated in the hall.
0855 – 0910 Hours	Report of the Day II Sessions – Kuenzang Gyeltshen and Yangdon, SCE.

0910 – 0915 Hours	Introduction to the session and keynote speakers – *Reeta Rai and Thinley Wangchuk, SCE.*
0915 – 0945 Hours	Keynote address I Vulnerability: Practical applications for professionals in the social care field - *Vicki Banham, Edith Cowan University, Australia.*
0950 – 1020 Hours	Keynote address II Buddhist Social Work: An emerging social work trend in Asia - *Tatsuru Akimoto, Shokutoku University, Japan.*
1020 – 1040 Hours	*Question and answer session*
1040 – 1045 Hours	*Wrap up of the session - Reeta Rai and Thinley Wangchuk, SCE.*
1045 – 1115 Hours	*Tea break*

Note*: Following tea, there will be a parallel sessions of presentations across the two venues viz. Namgay Khangzang (Auditorium) and Rigpa Hall (Main Academic Building).*

Paper Presentation

Day III: May 4th, 2019 - Sunday

Venue: Namgay Khangzang

Session II	
Time	**Programme**
	Session Chair: Kristin Diemer, University of Melbourne, Australia.
1120 - 1125 Hours	*Opening remarks – Session chair.*
1130 – 1145 Hours	Exploring Buddhist Social Work: Outline of the Joint Research Project – *Josef Gohori, Shokutoku University, Japan.*

1150– 1205 Hours	Schools are providing a safe harbour and a sense of be-longing to their students: Beginning to seek alternate stories to suicides *Sonam Pelden, Edith Cowan University, Perth, Western Australia.*
1205 – 1225 Hours	*Question and answer Session.*
1225 – 1230 Hours	*Wrap up of the session – Session chair*
1230 – 1400 Hours	**Lunch and Art Exhibition**
Session III	
	Session Chair: Natalie Long, Curtin University, Australia.
1405 -1410 Hours	*Opening remarks – Session chair*
1415 – 1430 Hours	Should Organizations Provide Concessions to their Em-ployees who have Special Need Children? – *Bhuvan Israni, DIPR, New Delhi, India.*
1435 – 1450 Hours	The Spirit of Youth Volunteerism in Bhutan - A Case of Bhutan Sharing & Loving Youth (BSLY) – *Amrith Subba and Sam Subba, BSLY, Thimphu.*
1455 – 1510 Hours	Dynamics of Power and Decision Making in Employed Married Couples in Bhutan – *Tshering Dorji, SCE.*
1510 – 1530 Hours	*Question and answer session.*
1530 – 1540 Hours	*Wrap up of the session – Session chair.*
1540 -1610 Hours	*Tea break*
Venue Coordinator – Nandu Giri, SCE; and Rapporteur – Sonam Rinchen, SCE.	

Paper Presentation

Day III: May 4th, 2019 - Sunday

Venue: Rigpa Hall

Session II	
Time	**Programme**
	Session Chair: Prateeti Barman, Assistant Professor, Royal Global University, Guwahati, India.
1120 -1125 Hours	*Opening Remarks: Session Chair*

1130 – 1145 Hours	Principles of Practice when Providing Psychosocial Care in Palliative Care Settings – *Karen Anderson, Edith Cowan University, Australia.*
1150– 1205 Hours	Session Chair: Bibharani Swargiary, Assam Don Bosco University, Guwahati, India.
1205 – 1225 Hours	*Question and answer session.*
1225 – 1230 Hours	*Wrap up of the session – Session chair.*
1230 – 1400 Hours	**Lunch and Art Exhibition**
Session III	
	Session Chair: Paul Ban, University of Melbourne, Australia.
1405 - 1410 Hours	*Opening Remarks – Session Chair.*
1415 – 1430 Hours	Community Volunteerism among Youth-led Groups under Young Bhutan Network, Thimphu – *Tashi Dendup, RCSC, Thimphu.*
1435 – 1450 Hours	De-Suung and Volunteerism: My Engagement, Experience and Learning – *Rinchen Wangmo, Phuntshopelri PS, Samtse.*
1455 – 1510 Hours	Understanding social work profession in Bhutanese context –*Ugyen Tenzin, Dorji Lingpa Foundation, Wangdue.*
1515 – 1530 Hours	An Assessment of the Certificate Course in Social Work – *Ramesh Kumar Chhetri, SCE.*
1530 – 1550 Hours	*Question and answer session.*
1550 -1655 Hours	*Wrap up of the session – Session chair.*
1600 - 1630 Hours	*Tea break*
Venue Coordinator – Ramesh Kumar Chhetri, SCE; and Rapporteur – Dorji S, SCE.	

Panel Discussion

Day III: May 4th, 2019 - Friday

Venue: Namgay Khangzang

Time	Programme
	Moderator: Sherab Dorji, Reporter, Bhutan Broadcasting Service, Samtse.
1640 Hours	*Participants seated in the hall.*
0640 – 1650 Hours	*Introduction of the panel members and opening remarks – Moderator.*
1650 – 1720 Hours	Panel discussion.
1720 – 1730 Hours	Wrap up of the panel discussion – Moderator.

Closing Ceremony

Day III: May 4th, 2019 - Sunday

Venue: Namgay Khangzang

Time	Programme
1800 – 1815 Hours	Report of the day III sessions – Dorjis & Sonam Rinchen, SCE
1815 – 1825 Hours	Welcome address – Rinchen Dorji, President, SCE.
1825 – 1855 Hours	Award of certificates and tokens – Carlos Bohorquez, Child Protection Specialist, UNICEF Bhutan, Guest of Honour
1855 – 1905 Hours	Closing remarks –. Ganeshman Gurung, SCE.
1905 – 1925 Hours	Address by Guest of Honour.
1925 – 1930 Hours	Vote of thanks –.Kinley, SCE
1930 Hours	Conference closing dinner.

IN THIS ISSUE —————————————————

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