



**NATIONAL SEMINAR**

**Community Organisation from a Tribal Perspective Towards New Social Work  
Theories of Change and Development**

**Organised by:**

**Centre for Community Organisation and Development Practice (CODP)**  
School of Social Work  
Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Guwahati Campus

In collaboration with

**Tribal Intellectual Collective India (TICI)**

And

**The North East Research & Social Work Networking (NERSWN)**

**21<sup>st</sup> November 2019**

## Concept Note

The community has been an important site of development workers right from the earliest days as seen in the Community Service Organizations and Settlement House movements in the US and the UK in the late nineteenth century. In India too, the pre-independence period and particularly in the post-Independence period, community organization acquired increasing prominence in the State's development framework, more so with the professionalisation and rise of Social Work education.

Over the years, the framework, focus and practice of Community Organisation (CO) has also altered along with changing trends in society and the identification of context as fundamental to practice. From an initial emphasis on charitable activities and urban-based work (similar to that seen in the US and UK), after the 1950s the focus shifted to the massive Community Development Programme (CDP) being implemented in India, with focus on rural development activities through government support. The limitations of this approach became evident with the passage of time. This came to a head during the social and political ferment in India in the 1960s. Community organization then was emphasized as an important means of social action for social change and an increased involvement of voluntary organizations in community organization. Development and social change model was the most important theoretical contribution of the 70s and 80s. This model still occupies centre-stage in community organization and development practice. Simultaneously from the 80s onwards there has been greater interest in community organization in urban settings, shifting away from the erstwhile almost exclusive focus on rural areas.

The period after the 90s has posed a new set of challenges for community organizers and development workers. The ascent of neoliberalism as the primary ideology governing the state's development interventions has meant a steady withdrawal of the state from development activities. In fact, a critical engagement with state policy as an integral part of social work practice has become even more vital, with neoliberal economic policy and structural adjustment programmes having led to further impoverishment of the marginalized sections of society and widening inequalities in society.

The current scenario demands critical engagement, at both the theoretical and practical levels, on the part of community organizer. Working from a pro-poor, pro-marginalized groups perspective, the community organizer needs to work with communities towards extending the spaces for engagement with the state, and resisting the multiple onslaughts on the rights and entitlements of the marginalised groups. There is a need to evolve alternate models of development that are pro-poor and also environment-friendly. Those who have been historically disadvantaged, who now lack land, appropriate skills, higher education and / or other resources are not able to benefit from the fruits of this so called progress and development. The geographies of deprivation, physical movements of the poor and disenfranchised, and the visible influence of macro development policies on specific communities, indicate a need to revisit the notion community and the theory and practice of community organisation.

During the last six decades, various policies and programmes have emerged. Worth mentioning among them is the Fifth Five-year Plan which recognized context specific planning and administration<sup>1</sup>. In the 10th Five year plan, three-pronged strategy of social empowerment, economic empowerment and social justice was launched for the upliftment of scheduled tribes. Notwithstanding the efforts made in the last six decades, the reality of tribes in India is still an issue that requires a definitive pro tribal policy, community empowerment programme and a consistent system. In fact, the present context of globalization and liberalization has thrown up newer challenges rendering the task more difficult. The issue of poverty, ignorance, illiteracy, indebtedness, neglect, exploitation, displacement is still prevalent. Given this scenario, it becomes critical to engage in understanding the entire processes taken for protection and development of scheduled tribes with the emerging social work profession for engaging and developing new theories of change and development.

The theory of tribal social work is an upcoming framework. In the context of practice however it is to be noted that the same has always been practiced in the tribal communities even though there is resistance to its theory in professional social work. Interestingly those writing about tribal social work argues that tribal social work is embodied within tribal realities at a very organic level. Their systems are organised around a way of caring and sharing and the organic structures in which such processes are operationalised is embedded in the community system itself. However with time and especially with the emergence of interventions from outside the community, there is a stark fragmentation of these organic structures.

In the light of the above, the objectives of the seminar is to revisit and disentangle community organisation from the perspective of Tribal towards new Social Work theories of change and to situate the same in current paradigm of development with focus on the ground realities, dynamics and changes at the regional, national and international levels.

**Themes for the seminar:**

1. Community Organisation in the Tribal Context: Field Experience and Case Studies
2. Revisiting the Community Development Framework in India
3. The theory and practice of Community Organisation (CO) in Social Work
4. Re-imagining Community Organisation with current structures of global political economy
5. Learning Social Work from Tribal Communities: Emerging theories and practice from Tribal Intellectual Collective

**Outcome:**

- a) The selected full papers will be published in an edited volume with ISBN number.
- b) Build a network and resource directory of development workers/practitioners, researchers, experts and academicians.

**Keynote speaker:**

- Dr. Bodhi S.R., TISS, Mumbai

**Venue:** Tata Institute of Social Sciences- Guwahati

**Participant Profile:** Social work practitioners, academicians, researchers, policy analysts, educationists, Community workers, Development practitioners from India and International.

**Guideline for Submission of Full Papers:** Full paper should not exceed 5000 words and in MsWord format, to be submitted with following guidelines:

- Only original and quality research papers will be accepted for presentation after a blind review.
- The First page contains name of the topic, name of the author (Bold, font size 14, Times New Roman), and their organisational affiliation, communication address, email and mobile / phone number (Normal font size 12, Time New Roman).
- Second page contains the name of the paper, abstract, and key words.
- With the name of the topic on the top, the whole paper will be presented in the third page onwards.
- Paper size- A4, Margin – 1 inch all sides, Font Size – 12, Font – Times new roman, Line spacing – 1.5 pt., 1 blank line after each paragraph.
- References or citations should be as per the EPW / APA style of references.

**Email your full paper to:**

[joseph.riamei@tiss.edu](mailto:joseph.riamei@tiss.edu)

**Registration Fee: Rs.200/- (Inclusive for Breakfast, Lunch & Tea)**

**Important Dates:**

Last date of receiving full paper: November 18, 2019

Seminar Dates: November 21, 2019

**For further information contact:**

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