



REGIONAL COOPERATION NEWSLETTER – South Asia
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Editor

P.K. Shajahan, PhD¹

Guest Editor

L. Arya Chandran²

Contents	Pg No
1. A Tribute to People’s President	2
2. Featured Article: Water discourses- A cause of conflict in South Asia	3
3. Need for Strengthening of Primary Care – Stepping Stone to Universal Health Coverage in India	5
4. New emerging Class of workers in India	8
5. Impact of Rural Urban Migration in India	11
6. Seeking Suggestions and Contributions to Asia Pacific regional report of the Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development 2016	14

¹ *Professor of Social Work, Tata Institute of Social Sciences and Regional President: ICSW – South Asia*

² *PhD Scholar, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. laraychandran@gmail.com*

1. A Tribute to People's President

Twenty ninth July 2015, was a day of mourning for entire India. Dr. Avul Pakir Jainulabdeen Abdul Kalam, popularly known as 'Missile Man', passed away suffering from a massive heart attack while delivering a lecture at the Indian Institute of Management. He was 11th President of India from 2002 to 2007 and was one of the popular presidents. He was born to a poor Muslim family in South India and rose with sheer effort in education.



He was driving force behind India's space and missile programmes, chief scientific advisor to Prime Minister of India and Secretary of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and finally the President of India. After his presidential term he was engaged in interacting with students of various schools and colleges. He believed in tapping the potential of youth and during each interaction he inspired them and motivated them to be part of India's development. Dr.Kalam has written several inspirational books, most notably his autobiography Wings of Fire, aimed at motivating Indian youth. His book India 2020 strongly advocates an action plan to develop India into a knowledge superpower. The Government of India has honoured him with the Padma Bhushan in 1981 and the Padma Vibhushan in 1990 and India's highest civilian honour, the Bharat Ratna, for his immense and valuable contribution to the scientific research and modernisation of defence technology in India. He has also received honorary doctorates from 40 universities. Kalam's 79th birthday was recognised as *World Students' Day* by United Nations. It was one of Kalam's wishes that there be no holiday announced for his death and he wanted his people to work an extra day. APJ Abdul Kalam will be always remembered as a person who taught India to dream and have given the people a clear vision to walk ahead.

- **Editors**

2. *Featured Article:*

Water discourses- A cause of conflict in South Asia³



L. Arya Chandran: Guest Editor

‘The wars of the 21st century will be fought for water’, well quoted by Ismail Serageldine, former Vice President, World Bank. Snow covered mountains are primary sources of South Asian Rivers. Ganges, Indus and Brahmaputra are the transboundary rivers which are critical to economic growth, food and energy security in South Asia. But population growth, industrial development, urbanisation, environmental pollution and increased production of hydro energy have raised the claim for water resources.

South Asian countries’ economies are heavy dependent over agriculture, and quality growing of agriculture sector depends upon fresh or more precisely non-saline water (Hassan 2013)⁴. Water is tied to national security as it flow from one border to other and therefore any information regarding transboundary rivers is difficult to access. The major water and energy conflicts in South Asia exist between, Indo-Pak, Indo-Bangladesh, Indo-Nepal and Afghan-Pak.

Indo – Pak

Indus river is born in Tibet and flows through India and Pakistan. Indus water treaty was signed between India and Pakistan on water sharing in 1960. As India is upper riparian, the construction and alteration of dams and barrages over Chenab and Jhelum rivers and diversion of water from Krishnaganga/Nelum river for power generation deteriorate the availability of water in Pakistan. Even though the treaty is considered to be successful future conflict cannot be neglected with increased demand for water.

Indo - Bangladesh

India and Bangladesh share 54 rivers between them. The allocation and development of water resources of Ganges river that flow from northern India to Bangladesh, has been a subject of

³ L. Arya Chandran , Phd student, School of Social Work, TISS, Mumbai

⁴ Hassan Zaheerul. 2013. ‘Way forward to South Asian water crisis’. *Journal of South Asian Studies*. 1(01), 35-49.

conflict between the countries. Conflict started with India's construction of barrage at Farakka, to increase the diversion of Ganges water to the Bhagirathi-Hooghly river to flush silt and keep Calcutta harbor operational during the dry season. Which was been protested by Bangladesh claiming that its rivers were drying and other environmental problems. A bilateral treaty was signed between the countries in 1996 that established a 30year water sharing arrangement. The treaty established a long term solution and cooperation was created. Despite the treaty, still a faction in Bangladesh feels that the amount of water allocated to Bangladesh is unjust and insufficient. India in turn feels that the Kolkata port and National Thermal Power Corporation is not getting enough supply of water because of water allocated to Bangladesh.

Indo - Nepal

Koshi, Gandak, and Karnali, three of the Ganges tributaries cross the Indo-Nepal border. India and Nepal signed the Kosi agreement in 1954 to regulate the flow of the river and ensure flood management. Under the project, barrage in the India-Nepal border was constructed and embankments on either side of the river were raised. The project was also to be utilized for power generation and irrigation purposes. There have been various disputes over this agreement and it aggravated with the devastating flood in 2008 which affected both India and Nepal. Nepal claimed India's negligence in maintaining the upkeep of the embankments of the barrage as reason for the flood. Nepal alleges that the barrage is not benefitting them as expected and therefore does not consider it as a fair deal.

Afghanistan- Pakistan

Kabul and its tributaries originate in Afghanistan and flows eastwards into Pakistan. There is no water sharing agreement between the countries even though both the countries benefit from the water reservoir. The increase in water demand in Kabul city, development of hydro power projects and irrigation in Afghanistan has raised concern in Pakistan.

Water reserve in South Asia is more a political, which is based on the political deficit between the countries. The scarcity of water resource leading to conflict between the countries cannot be disregarded. Even though bilateral treaties exist between countries, any proposed development on water resource makes suspicion on each other. Therefore it is necessary to bring a change in approach on water discourse which will benefit both the nations. It is also important to look into local livelihood pattern and ecological management in water discourse.

3. Need For Strengthening of Primary Care –Stepping Stone to Universal Health Coverage In India⁵

In good old days in a traditional society like ours, the family doctor used to be first point of contact. In case of any illness, neighborhood doctor was the consulting point in treating not only the illness as such but also he used to perform the role of family adviser/ counselor. Another significant aspect of this family doctor concept was his clinical examination through use of bare hand and at best stethoscope hanging from his neck. The confidence of the whole family was on such family doctor that he would bring miracle even of chronic illness as far as treatment is concerned. This is to be seen in the context of lack of corporate hospitals and multi discipline clinical centers as freely available now and importantly equipment oriented treatment of today to that of clinical examination of the patient.

It is necessary to emphasis as to why such primary care oriented system is emerging as important healthcare institution in this globalized world due to following reasons:-

- Medical science definitely believes that tertiary care procedure would be prevented by timely primary care facility to patients.
- Almost 80% of our patients/ beneficiaries in a social security concept visit such family doctor in the form of dispensary or medical practitioner or primary health care Centre whatever you may call. This is also a fact almost 80% of our routine problems are effectively treated or managed by so called general practitioners or family physicians.
- Another important reason for increasing emphasis on primary health care is due to the fact that it integrates preventive, promotive, curative and rehabilitative aspect of health care. This may popularly be called '**All in One**' concept which is particularly to be seen in the context of our country where 76% of the population lives in rural areas having access to 26% of doctors' population.
- Due to rising cost of medical care, emphasis is now on primary health care because health

⁵ B.K. Sahu, Former Insurance Commissioner (ESIC), now with Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority
Email : bk_sahuo4@yahoo.co

care indicators such as maternal mortality, infant mortality and life expectancy are better in European countries because of strong primary care set up unlike the U.S. where focus is more on tertiary care.

- In a run up to high ended treatment entailing costly expenditure, it is primary health care detection which will not only reduce demand on limited resources available for tertiary care treatment but will also definitely ensure affordable medical care with little improvisation and support in the form of availability of a Physician and Pediatrician in a small place of 600 to 1000 Sq.ft having nursing and diagnostic services. Such primary care clinic is not only cost effective both from infrastructure and human resources point of view but also satisfaction level as far as general public is concerned.

We may also go for mobile clinic with a general practitioner and minimum Nursing/Para-medical staff having commonly used drugs, dressing and which can take instant blood sugar and ECG tests. With a fixed cost (onetime) of Rs. 20 lakh and Rs.2 lakhs of running cost (an estimated figures taking cost of Van, equipment, salary, medicines and fuel cost etc, this will not only be accessible to all rural areas hitherto remaining untouched due to non-availability of Doctor and staff but also make economic sense. This will also act as buffer to nearest city/ district hospital both of Government and Corporate level.

This orientation towards primary care may be responsible for success of health care in the countries like Malaysia, Thailand and China having concept of '**Barefoot Doctor**' and to provide universal health coverage. Since Planning Commission (now named NITI Aayog) and Health Ministry are now in search for an answer to extend universal health care, to me, this arrangement of **primary health care** concept which is also a success in UK health care system is the answer to ensure affordable and reachable services to crores of population in our country. This is also equally needed to be taken seriously for any social security oriented scheme like ESI and other private insurers so that beneficiaries not only get hassle-free treatment but also the rising cost of medical care is arrested towards utilization of limited resources for bring out new schemes for qualitative and quantitative growth of any social security scheme in the country.

In view of recent decisions of Central Government toward **increased FDI in Insurance Industry & Opening of Private Healthcare** Provided by Insurance agencies for beneficiaries of Government controlled Social Security Schemes like ESI, there is now a great Opportunity to secure **“Universal Health care & Minimum Cash Benefits”** in the form of Pension & Accidental Deaths etc. for Workers in particular & citizens in general in our country. It is, therefore a bit of counsel for our Trade unions that instead of opposing the present opening of choice for workers covered under ESI & other statutory Acts, they should cooperate to establish “Mechanism to bring Synergy between Ministry of Labor & Ministry of Finance (for IRDA monitored Insurance schemes) “to get the best Affordable Healthcare for Workers. It is important to stress the importance of **minimum standard of health care and cash compensation in the contingencies of illness, disablement, unemployment and death of workers**. This is achievable provided following measures are adopted:-

- Strengthening of primary care services
- Popularization of Indigenous System of Medicines (ISM).
- Greater emphasis on Public Private Partnership (PPP Module) with active participation of Local self-Government bodies, NGOs, trade unions and corporate bodies.
- Use of Information Technology (IT) involving passing of bills, Inventory Management Et delivery of services involving high ended expenditure.

There is no **Dearth of funds in the country but Dearth of Right Attitude** to implement the above proposals. Let us strengthen **Primary Heath Care Facilities** in our country as discussed in this Article to achieve as first step towards **“Universalization Of Social Security** “for our Workers which will go a long way to bring **“Skill Development & reduce Migration of Labour”** in the long run.

4. New emerging class of workers in India⁶

The labour market in India is very complex and segmented. It consists of sectors and group of workers whose characteristics are different and concur in a region, a sector or in an industry. When I say it is widely segmented, it means that there exist different segments based on gender, caste, religion, social groups, wages, working conditions, regions, class etc. It is complex because workers often undertake multiple tasks at a time. The Indian Labour Market is characterized by the predominance of informal employment. In India more than 90 per cent of the informal workers are working as casual or self-employed workers. Near about 50% of the national income evolve from the informal sector in India⁷. Now here it is important to understand that why unorganised sector is increasing.

After independence, policymakers have preferred highly regulated industrial production system through licenses for initiation and expansion of businesses. They have favoured a mixed economy where public sector would play a dominant role and on the trade front, import substitution and export pessimism. Due to inefficiency of this model, there have been calls for economic liberalization which mean liberalizing economy in terms of foreign investment, import export, privatization, removal of license, etc. Economic liberalization process started in early 1980s but has assumed pace and significance since 1991. Economic reforms have covered both with regard to domestic economy and trade sector.

Globalisation has led to many changes in the Indian Labour market. It has experienced fairly high growth under different policy regimes. The economic and social reforms after 1991 had a profound impact on the functioning of the labour market. One of the effects is “modernisation of Indian labour market”. The process of modernization can be explained in various forms like the changing nature of employment opportunities, change in skill and education level of workforce, emergence of new industries which requires new skills. But it has not resulted in creation of new jobs in non-agricultural sector.

There is a major change in the approach of organizations to cope with the market situation. One

⁶ Garima Singh, Ph.D student (Management and Labour Studies), Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai

⁷ Report of the Committee on Unorganized Sector Statistics, National Statistical Commission, 2012

solution that organizations operate all around the globe is the use of non- standard workers. Non standard workers give organizations the required flexibility and the right human resources within a short period of time to cope with the extremely volatile market. Non standard workers have the element of precarious job as they suffer from job insecurity, low level of unionization, inequality in income and wage. This kind of work is also known as, “flexible work”, “contingent work”, “precarious work”, etc. This form of workers has been used in each and every sector of our economy. Flexibility in labour market has become one of the key sources of competitive advantage for the firms in the age of globalization. This has led to expansion of informal sector in Indian Labour Market

In a globalised and ever expanding market, most firms require labour flexibility. Large modern firms of today, rather than being vertically integrated, believe in and survive on outsourcing. The central plank of the ‘neoliberal’ model was that growth and development depended on market competitiveness, everything should be done to maximise competition and competitiveness, and to allow market principles to permeate all aspects of life. One theme was that countries should increase labour market flexibility, which means to shift the risks and insecurity onto workers and their families. This has resulted into creation of global non standard workers, consisting of many millions who does not have anchor of stability. These classes of workers are emerging as a new class of workers. These workers are very different from the permanent workers. They have different needs and demands and it is important to focus on this class as they are growing day by day. In India⁸ at present there are total 347.7 million workers who are working in unorganised sector and there are 27.8 million temporary workers who are working in formal space, but still lack security.

After globalisation new class of structure is emerging not only in India but all over the world. At the top we have the elite class of India who are very few and are known to most of us, in the middle there are permanent workers who have securities and good salary, below that there are non standard workers who does not have any kind of securities etc. and at last we have unemployed people.

⁸ Srija. A. & Shirke. S.V., 2014, *Special feature An analysis of the informal labour market in India*, Confederation of Indian Industries, *Economy Matters*, pp 40-46

According to Marx there are only two class one is capitalist class and other are workers. But we have to understand this fact that there are two different class among the workers. First is secured workers and other is insecure workers. This class of workers is in making, which exists through very broad range of insecurities. This class does not have any vision where it is going. When we talk about non standard workers in Indian they don't have any sense of empathy in them because of their nature of job which they do is temporary and they keep on changing their jobs. They don't have any sense of belonging as they know they don't have to meet these people again with whom they are working now. It gives rise to very bad organisational culture.

There are many factors which are responsible for this like globalisation and neoliberalism. When we open our economies or liberalise them it means that we are extending the limits of our market. This leads to the trebling the supply of workers in the open market. In this process developed countries get cheap labour from developing and underdeveloped countries. This system has been designed in such a way where the risk can be shifted to the workers.

It is important to focus on this emerging class of workers in India because they are insecure and whosoever is insecure is in danger of being marginalised.

5. Impact of Rural- Urban Migration In India⁹

Migration in India is not new. Historical accounts show that people have moved from rural to urban spaces in search of work, in response to environmental shocks & stresses, to escape religious persecution and due to political conflict. Also improved communications, transport networks, conflicts over natural resources and new economic opportunities have created unprecedented levels of mobility. Internal migration in India accounts for a huge population of 309 million as per Census of India 2001 which is nearly 30 percent of total population.

One of the major characteristics of urbanization in developing country like India is found to be the rural- urban migration. Due to this rapidity in the increase of volume in migration, the urban centers find it very difficult to cope up with high influx of people, which ultimately creates several problems, especially housing shortage, and deterioration in basic civic amenities. In spite of several modern means, available in the urban environment, people in these centers find it difficult to improve the quality of life and state agencies are unable to provide them their basic rights when they enter to a newer space.

India being one of the leading developing nations has also tried to develop industries, transport network and other infrastructure facilities during a short period. As a result, industrial centres, mining centres, administrative centres and growth centres have increased in number. For example, Kolkata, Chennai, Mumbai, Delhi was noted for attracting rural migrants from distant places. More particularly, Kolkata, Mumbai and Chennai were attracting rural migrants from their hinterlands to provide job opportunities to uneducated and educated persons. Most migration literature distinguishes between “pull” and “push” factors. These do not operate in isolation of one another. At one end of the migration spectrum workers could be locked into a debt-migration cycle through some form of labour bondage, where earnings from migration are used to repay debts incurred at home or in the destination areas, thereby cementing the migration cycle. Field evidence shows that the major sub-sectors using migrant labour are textiles, construction, stone quarries & mines, brick-kilns, small scale industry (diamond cutting, leather

⁹ Noli Nivedita Tirkey, *Doctoral Research Scholar; School of Development Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai*

accessories etc), crop transplanting and harvesting, sugarcane cutting, plantations, rickshaw pulling, food processing including fish and prawn processing, domestic work, security services, sex work, small hotels and roadside restaurants and tea shops and street vending.

Moreover, contemporary trends indicate that a growing number of migrants choose to retain strong links with their villages because of social ties and a long term intention to look for a better life in the village. Despite a number of studies based on the field surveys of individual researchers, there is dearth of literature that covers the large population that represents a generalised analysis of the temporary migration in India. Therefore, there is a need to use large-scale survey data to be able to generalize the findings on temporary and seasonal migration as well as to understand the regional variations and association with poverty and illiteracy.

Migrant labourers, whether in rural or urban areas, usually live in deplorable conditions with inadequate provision of drinking water and basic services. Seasonal migrant labourers live in open spaces. Apart from seasonal workers, workers who migrate to the cities in search of work live in parks and on the pavement in squatter settlements or slums.

When male migrate alone, the impact on the family unit and on women, children and the elderly left behind can be quite significant. Male migration has also been seen to influence the direct participation of women in the economy as workers and decision-makers and increased the degree of their interaction with the world beyond the family and kin. But given the patriarchal tradition, women may have to cope with a number of problems that are further exacerbated by the uncertainty of the timing and size of remittances on which the precarious household economy ultimately depends. This, in turn pushes women and children from poor laboring households to participate in the labour market under adverse conditions. Thus, the impact of migration on women can be twofold, but the strong influence of patriarchy restricts the scope of women's autonomy.

Select region for the case study-

According to the Census, 2001, the population of Mumbai city was enumerated to be 11,978,450 persons, roughly about 1 per cent of the total Indian population. Mumbai being a central area in commercial, administrative and industrial activities attract a large number of migrants from

various parts of the country. As per projected population of Mumbai it was estimated for 2011, the city might provide residence to nearly 14 to 15 million persons, which has now increased to approximately 20.5 million persons. The constraint of non-availability of land, of being hemmed in by sea on its three sides, has limited its geography and imposed severe strain on the city which are seen in inadequate to poor housing, its infrastructure's inability to keep pace with the demand, etc. World Bank actually sees the city as having reached the inflection point for decline. One of the main ironies of this most prosperous of the country's cities is that it houses more than half of its population (54 per cent) in slum areas which are highly congested, devoid of basic civic services and more importantly, absence of tenure to their dwellings. This population is mostly excluded from planning. They find it hard even to open a savings bank account.

The understanding of contemporary migration has been considerably advanced by theoretical work based on neoclassical economics, new household economies, dual labour market theory, network theory, world systems theory, cumulative causation and more recent developments in transnationalism theory. There is also a growing body of empirical research relating to migration. Arguably, however, neither theory nor research has had as much impact on policy formulation as political discourse, media reports and public opinion on the nature, purpose and socio-economic impact of migration. These migratory flows often have profound impacts on the socio-economic and ethnic composition of societies, resulting in new policy challenges related to the successful integration of migrants into the host society.

6. Seeking Suggestions and Contributions to Asia Pacific Regional Report of the Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development 2016

Dear Colleague,

We are delighted to make contact with you with this email and would like to invite you to share your work with our regional and global social work colleagues.

You may be aware that based on the decisions reached at the Hong Kong conference (June 2010), the leadership of the three international organizations (International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW), International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) and the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW) representing the entire spectre of Social Work Practice, Social Work Education and Social Development Work globally, have agreed on a set of objectives to meet the joint aspirations for social justice and social development.

The three global partner organisations affirm the vision of the **Global Agenda (GA)** which makes explicit the contribution of social work and social development in building a 'society for all' in which every individual has an active role to play within a fair and just world. During the period 2012-2016 to focus our efforts on the following areas/ pillars/ themes of GA:

- Promoting social and economic equalities
- Promoting the dignity and worth of people
- Working toward environmental sustainability
- Strengthening recognition of the importance of human relationships

The 2014 joint world conference in Melbourne (<http://www.swsd2014.org/>) attended by 1500 social work and social development practitioners, researchers, educators and consumers from all over the world deliberated on the first theme - that is: *Promoting social and economic equalities*. Important insights have emerged and are influencing our professional practice in this ever changing global society. Social workers all over the world celebrated 2014 World Social Work Day with the theme: *Social and Economic Crises – Social Work Solutions* contributing to the first theme of the Global Agenda.

For the 2015 World Social Work day in March, social workers all over the world carried out different activities and advocated for the second theme of the GA: *Promoting the dignity and worth of people*. Followed on from this, the 2016 Joint World Conference in Korea (<http://www.swsd2016.org/>) is focusing its deliberations and engagement on the same theme: Promoting the dignity and worth of people.

We, Bala Raju Nikku (Nepal School of Social Work and Universiti Sains Malaysia, IASSW Member at Large) and Rose Henderson (IFSW Asia Pacific Member at Large) were given the responsibility to put together the AP regional report on the Global Agenda for Social Work which will then feed in to the global report.

Asia Pacific is a vast and diverse region with many religions, cultures, languages, political structures and governance practices. We are also aware a lot of crucial social work has been carried out by many schools of social work, NGOs and government agencies and social work unions in the Asia Pacific region. It will be of paramount importance for us to share our work, learn from others and network.

We count on your support and contributions to come up with a report that is balanced and able to capture the essence and reflect the aspirations from all of us from the AP region.

To assist in this we ask you to send us a brief report, photos, videos or press clippings that showcase how the social work profession in your country/state/ district is promoting and showcasing the theme of *Promoting the dignity and worth of people*. Your contributions will be acknowledged.

We would also like to receive in advance of the meeting, any photos, poems, reports and any other materials contributing to the second theme of the GA, the theme that reflects on Promoting the dignity and worth of people. Please email them to us at the below email addresses. Please ask us if you have any questions and or suggestions.

We thank you in advance for taking time to write us and share your work with all of us.

Sincerely,

Bala Raju Nikku (balarajunikku@yahoo.com) and
Rose Henderson rose.henderson@cdhb.health.nz

On behalf of APASWE, IFSW AP and ICSW Asia

Mariko Kimura,
President, IFSW AP

P.K. Shajahan
President, ICSW SA

Fentiny Nugroho
President, APASWE

Heung Bong Cha
President, ICSW-NEA

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Comments and queries may be addressed to

P. K. Shajahan *Ph.D*
(Regional President – South Asia)
Professor and Chairperson
Centre for Community Organisation and Development Practice
School of Social Work
TATA INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
Mumbai - India

Tel+91 9820565165

Email: pkshajahan@icsw.org

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