

Report on the Workshop on “Socio Behavioural Interventions – Changing Trends”

Date: June 15th 2017; Venue – National Institute for Research in Tuberculosis, ICMR



The workshop “Socio Behavioural Interventions – Changing Trends” was held on June 15th 2017. The scope of the workshop was presented by Dr Beena Thomas, Head of the Department of Social and Behavioural Research (DSBR). The workshop primarily aimed at bringing social and behavioural professionals from diverse disciplines including academicians, practitioners and researchers on a common platform. This gathering sought to enable sharing and learning from manifold experiences that addressed social and behavioral issues as a part of development in the various areas they worked with. The workshop was well attended with ninety participants.

The chief guest was Dr. Upendra Choudhary, Director, ICSSR. He emphasized the importance of social and behavioural research and appreciated the efforts taken by NIRT in organising a workshop of this nature bringing together professionals working in diverse areas.



He outlined the various opportunities ICSSR offered by way of grants for fellowships, courses, workshops, conference presentations and encouraged participants to make use of this opportunity. He said little was known of the work done in the southern areas and most applicants for ICSSR grants came from the North and Central regions.

The agenda included various eminent speakers – Dr Raja, Principal of Madras School of Social work, Dr Shuba Kumar, Director – SAMARTH, Dr. Gladston Xavier, Head of the



Department, Social Work, Loyola College, Dr Shanmugavelayutham, Mr. Thaddeus Alfonso, Associate Director, Niraivagam, Don Bosco Institute of Psychological Services, Dr. Shymala Natarajan, Director, SIAAP, Mr. Manikandan and Ms. Preenu from NPS (Network of Professional Social Workers). The topics covered were on Human Rights (refugees and migrants), socio-behavioural research in education, qualitative research as an integral part of social and

behavioural research, ethics in social and behavioural research, socio-behavioural research in Mental Health, use of social media in networking which is an important intervention tool, psychosocial intervention studies of NIRT and community outreach programs to reach the unreached.

The panel discussion brought together social workers, academicians and practitioners to present their contributions and focus on areas that need to be addressed in social and behavioural research. The panel included Dr. Miriam Samuel who heads the department of Social Work in Madras Christian College (MCC), Chennai, Mrs. Sudha Ganapathy, retired staff of NIRT and former HoD of Social and Behavioural Research, NIRT, Ms. Hydwick Rosy from the Tamilnadu Slum Clearance Board (TNSCB), Ms. Aspy, founder of Aruwee, an NGO for Elderly in Chennai, Dr. Shanmugavelayutham, TN-Forces, Ms. Girija Krishnan from Indian Council for Child Welfare (ICCW), Tamil Nadu who work for the cause of juvenile delinquents, Ms. Rohini Krishnan from Government Stanley Hospital, Chennai, Dr Thilakavathy, Social Scientist, National Institute of Epidemiology (NIE), Chennai, and Dr. Geetha Shanmugam, senior Social Worker and former HoD of Social and Behavioural Research in NIRT.



The need for promoting social and behavioural research in the many unexplored areas as defined by the panel and presentations was widely felt. This included among the youth in juvenile homes, the elderly, Dalits, migrants, need for a gender perspective in understanding many issues such as issues around caste, disasters, among urban youth, the need for understanding reasons for sexual abuse, violence and crime. There is urgent need to work on interventions that are feasible and scalable apart from research that only highlights problems.

The consensus which evolved from the workshop was the creation of a Socio-behavioural Research Forum. The proposed activities of the Social and Behavioural Research Forum was presented by Dr Karikalan, Social Scientist, NIRT. This included:-

- Acting as a platform for information exchange and dissemination of practises and other experiences in socio-behavioural research
- Identification of thematic research areas and forming core groups to pursue research in that thematic area
- Promoting the need for ethics to be a crucial component of all research activities
- Developing multi-disciplinary research proposals in socio-behavioural research with involvement of diverse pool of researchers academics and implementers

- Developing repository for socio-behavioural research data and documents derived from various sources
- Identifying socio-behavioural researchers and practitioners for best practise and encouraging them through awards annually
- Conducting advocacy among stakeholders for key socio-behavioural issues
- For initiating an official newsletter of the forum
- Providing training and capacity building in socio-behavioural research that include qualitative research
- Membership into the forum could be from multi-disciplines as any social development activity towards change would require the inputs from other related disciplines.