

The Future of Social Work: Seven Pillars of Practice

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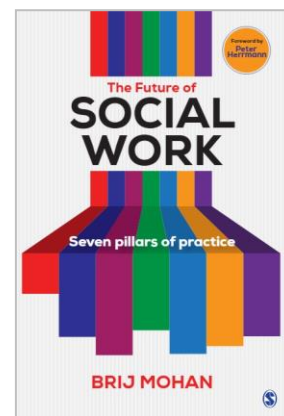
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I am pleased to write this review for the *Journal of Psychiatric Social Work*. Dr. Brij Mohan, the author of this reveting book, is known for his contribution in Social Psychiatry in India. His findings appeared in professional circles after his prodigious research on the mental patients was published as *Social Psychiatry in India: A Treatise on the Mentally II* (Minerva, Calcutta 1973). He had published--and continued to do so vigorously--on mental illness both as a micro and macro-social problem. After he left Lucknow University, his primary focus of research has been on social policy, social work, social welfare and social development from the standpoint of a critical social philosopher. Many scholars have linked his approach to alienation and oppression as Sartrean, but this reviewer finds his contributions more as Foucauldian. From insanity to violence to human freedom and oppression, his analyses are stimulating and challenging. The book embodies his philosophy on the human condition as a social work educator.

The Future of Social Work is a critical examination of the state of the social work profession that he finds anachronistic. He finds the profession mired in its own contradiction. His basic argument is: In this age of artificial intelligence where aligrothisms of existence have changed, the meanings of both "social" and "work" are conceptually different. Both constructs need to be refined. The models of social work, as framed and implemented across the world, are no longer relevant in this socially distanced climate. He questions the effectiveness and legitimacy of the profession itself.

Since this book was published before the outbreak of Covid-19, its relevance has

attained a measure of legitimacy. One can get a doctorate and other professional degrees online if one can afford obscene fees. The prevalence of this new webinar industry, even in Social Work, is a refutation of certain basic values that define professionalism. The Seven Pillars of practice that he proffers merit serious consideration for the deconstruction of a noble profession. Implementation of this framework will radicalize social work in harmony with the nature of problems in a given culture. I highly recommend this book to all social scientists who value 'mindfulness' and wellness within and beyond the hazards of a 'therapeutic society.'

This book has ten chapters apart from a foreword by Peter Herrmann and a prologue by the author. The first chapter is 'Poverty, War and Welfare' chapter second 'The World of Welfare' third chapter is 'Plateaus and Platitudes of Practice' fourth one is 'Archeology of Social Practice' fifth is 'Transforming Social Work' sixth chapter 'Hermeneutics of Help' seventh chapter is 'Seven Pillars of Social Practice' eighth chapter is 'Environmental Justice: A Practice Model' ninth chapter is 'Freedom and Vocabularies of Change' tenth chapter is 'The End of Social Work: Epilogue'. Altogether it is a must-read title as the book is an innovative humanitarian appraisal of contemporary professional ethics and practice. I passionately recommend this book for the future of social work.

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