

## Prof. B. S. Chavan – A tribute

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I understand this is not a conventional way to start an obituary and it may be considered a much-delayed reaction as well. The delay could be attributed to my own apprehension to express the feeling which is deeply hurting and I am poor in such expressions. Much more has been expressed and told by various people and professionals about Prof. Bir Singh Chavan and also about their personal-professional experiences of working or living with him. I would like to cite one here, "of the diverse array of activities, Prof. Chavan would perhaps best be remembered for his services in the area of community, social, and rehabilitation psychiatry".<sup>[1]</sup> These areas are very closely associated with Psychiatric Social Work and one can reckon his contribution to it which is incredibly indispensable. One of those is starting M. Phil in Psychiatric Social Work course under Centre of Excellence in mental health for manpower development schemes in mental health for the 11<sup>th</sup> 5-year<sup>[2]</sup> which is running well with full intake capacity of 8 seats every year; trainees are getting stipend (which he wanted to increase and make equal to UGC) scale and hostel accommodation for which various centres are still struggling.

Prof. Chavan always believed in a multidisciplinary team approach and was very firm in definition and allocation to the team members including PSWs/MSW which is evident in the departmental manual and various SOPs and guidelines which were prepared under his leadership or guideline. One instance of such a truthful effort was to develop a 'Screening Tool for Assessment of Psychosocial Problems (STAPP)' to overcome the lack of clarity or connivance about who will work on what issue and how to decide about a referral to another team member, particularly to a psychiatric social worker.<sup>[3]</sup>

On several occasions, he asserted that PSW faculty must take charge of certain areas of work in mental health. when I joined the department in June 2016 and wanted to cases on OPD he suggested starting a new clinic and with his active support and guidance

Psychosocial Intervention Clinic (PSI) was started and running since then along with various other clinics to address the different psychosocial needs.<sup>[4]</sup>



On the very first day of meeting at the department, I came to know that he has purposed to host the XXXIV Annual National Conference of Indian Society of Professional Social Work (ISPSW) the society was formally known as the Indian Society of Psychiatric Social Work. Subsequently, he not only nominated me the convenor of the conference but was given the choice to work generously and under his dynamic leadership and very active and sincere effort of the all faculties and other colleague conference was a grand success. We received a record number of 327 abstracts and the conference was one of the best conferences of the society.



I was set to restart the 'Indian Journal of Psychiatric Social Work' which was released during this conference. I am ever grateful to Prof. Chavan who has granted permission and also to keep the editorial office in the

Department of Psychiatry, Government Medical College and Hospital, Chandigarh. He wanted to make this an official journal of the department but due to various reasons, it never been possible however he remained the patron of the journal.

Under his patronship, one more memorable event was the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual National Conference of All India Association of Medical Social Work Professionals which was organized at Government Medical College and Hospital, Chandigarh from 24 - 25 March 2018. The theme of the conference was “Social Work Intervention in Health/Mental Health Setup” and got the responsibility of chairperson. There are many more such occasions when he graced the event with his generous support. He was proficient in engaging people and leading them towards grand success.



Medical Social Work Professionals of Government Medical College & Hospital, Chandigarh and All India Association of Medical Social Work Professionals, North Zone organised a Continuing Social Work Education on the occasion of World Social Work Day on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2017. He moderated a Panel Discussion on “Role of Medical Social Work Professionals in Sustainable Health in Community” graciously apart from his support and guidance to organize this event. In 2016 he encouraged to organize the World Social Work Day. He has a keen interest in psychosocial issues which is reflected during deliberations on these occasions.



These are the events related to psychiatric/professional social work apart from these quite a few conferences and academic events he hosted and given me the opportunity to take up different responsibilities; I learnt a lot from him since 2016 after joining the department.

In India, PSWs working as an allied most of the time so a supportive and courageous leader like him will always make a huge difference.

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