

Department of Social Work

Report of the Video conference on “Community Development - Opportunities and Challenges”.

A video conference was conducted on 23rd September, 2014 for students of Community Development Specialization on the theme “Community Development-Opportunities and Challenges”. The resource person for the session was Dr. Shajahan, PK, Professor, Dean, and Centre for Community Organization and Development Practice, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS). The duration of the session was 2 hours from 4-6pm. Specific objectives of the video conferencing were:

- To understand the challenges faced by the community development professionals in India
- To understand the employability of community development specialized Students
- To understand the best practices of TISS in terms of Rural and Urban community development and
- To understand the urban community development programs, implementation and strategies to work for urban community development

The video conference started with introduction by students and the resource person. Dr. Shajahan introduced himself and connected his experience with students queries based on the objectives of the conference. His interaction with students brought wide understanding about the community development profession. He highlighted the need of the hour is understanding the realities in the communities and willingness to work for it than following only theory. He shared the facts and shocking incidents in the community while working with disaster areas. He answered students question on slum clearance, slum development and slum rehabilitation authority in various states and discussed that, there is no need of stopping urbanization in our country instead make self reliant the rural areas, work with them, empower them, and stop migration to urban area. He shared the TISS experience in working with rescue operations of Orissa and Jammu and Kashmir flood. In Orissa, the aftermath of the disaster was worst than flood. He revealed the real facts of the communities like, even after a disaster, the minds of people were still flooded with casteism and religion that was keeping away them from availing effective rehabilitation measures. Dr. Shajahan stressed that, these are the realities you are going to face in the communities.

Understand and apply appropriate strategies without ending in conflict. He answered students query on employability as, in India, requirement for Community Development professionals are very high and even in western countries. They can be part of Policy developing, Missions, and Development programs. He asked students not to focus salary in the initial years of your career, get experienced and expertise, and then looks for better salaried jobs in this field. Because, we need more skills in working with communities. He concluded his session with explaining how TISS students are involved in regional, national events, disaster management, and management of classes without effecting their completion of course within the time frame of 2 years through postponement of the classes, final exams and compensate all in vacation days.

The video conference enriched the students with better understanding of strategies for urban and rural community development, imparted confidence among students to look forward for opportunities in Community Development profession. The program further gave an insight to students on the challenges faced by community development professionals and the strategies to overcome the challenges.

Dr. Sheeja Karalam

Faculty in charge