Chapter I: Social Work Education in India: An introduction

1.1 Indian Education System: Context

One of the main roles of the education system is to adequately contribute in national development (Shah 1981:1). The higher education system in India has grown in a remarkable way, particularly in the post-independence period to become one of the largest systems of its kind in the world. The system has many concerns like access, equity and relevance, re-orientation with emphasis on values, ethics and quality of higher education, finance and management, assessment of institutions and their accreditation. These issues are important for the country which intends to use higher education as a powerful tool to build a knowledge-based information society of the 21st century (Nigavekar 2003).

Traditionally, the Indian education system was confined to the elitist group (Muralidharan et.al 2005). With the practice of Varna system, the education was tailored to suit the needs of the priest (Brahmin) community, who were taught to read and write for religious and ritualistic purposes. The education traditionally catered to the interest of the higher and upwardly mobile community, which was small in number. Consequently, large number of other socially marginalized groups (Dalit, tribal, OBCs, and NT/DT) remained away from the education system. As a result, the education system in India is often criticized for exclusion of the marginalized groups and for lack of relevance and indigenous knowledge. However, during the British rule, from 1700 to 1947, India’s education policies reinforced the earlier elitist tendencies. By the early twentieth century other castes and marginalized groups realized the advantage of education and managed to acquire formal learning (Ibid). It is hoped that with inclusion of these groups in the education system for formal learning the Indian education system will become more relevant, contextual and indigenous in its nature adequately contributing to the national development (Shah 1981).

1.2 Social work education and Indigenous knowledge

Social work education as a stream of higher education system is more than 100 years old in the world and grew remarkably in past decades (Midgley 2000). In India, it has already completed 75 years and celebrated its platinum jubilee in the year 2012. However, the status of social work education in India, especially of its knowledge base, is still debated and commented upon in published work (UGC Report 1980) as well as in academic gatherings (seminars, conferences). Social work education as a profession is often considered as an emerging profession due to

The increasing attention ‘indigenous knowledge’ is receiving from academia and development institutions have not yet led to a unanimous perception about the concept of indigenous knowledge (Flavier 1995). Indigenous knowledge is local knowledge-knowledge that is unique to a given culture or society. Indigenous knowledge places emphasis on inclusion, interconnectivity and holistic way of being (Dumbrill and Green 2008). Indigenous knowledge according to Flavier (1995) is the information base for a society, which facilitates communication and decision-making. Indigenous information systems are dynamic and are continually influenced by internal creativity and experimentation as well as by contact with external systems.

The quality of education depends upon many factors such as quality of curriculum, institutional structure, competence of students, competence of the teachers recruited and promoted, their roles and responsibilities and the skill and type of knowledge component developed and applied in the teaching-learning processes. For any professional branch of education dealing with the needs of the society, it is imperative to incorporate the societal needs in its curriculum. This requirement is vital for the social work profession, which directly deals with the human issues (Vijayalaxmi 2004). Besides this, as a dynamic profession, the social work education has to keep pace with the changing social conditions by updating its knowledge base contextually to make it indigenous. To attain this purpose social work profession is obliged to have contextual learning and orientation to IKB (Shetty 1996; Pathak 2000:213).

The educator, who is the ‘key person,’ is largely responsible for the growth and establishment of the profession. Fulfillment of this responsibility depends upon the role played by the educators who are involved in training the professionals and developing knowledge for the profession (Desai A. 1994; Prasad 1997). The social work educators (SWE) impart knowledge and skills to the students to develop appropriate attitude for working with people and establishing linkages between theories and praxis wisdom within the socio-economic, political and cultural context in which they are embedded (Shetty 1996; Pathak 2000). In return the social work educators are expected to develop contextual and IKBd on their experiences to make the education more relevant (Pathak 1987, 2000; Prasad 1987).
The researcher as a social work student, practitioner and an educator experienced use of different kinds of knowledge base comprising of social sciences, western social work theories, praxis wisdom and indigenous knowledge produced by the Indian social work professionals. This experience and exposure coupled with the subtle observations made by the IFSW and by writers like Howe (1987) Trevithick (2009) and other intellectuals in the debates on the type of knowledge developed and used for social work training aroused interest of the researcher to understand this aspect in detail. In this background, this research study attempted to study the social work educational intuitions and the role of the social work educator in the development of indigenous knowledge to strengthen the social work education.

To begin with, the introductory chapter presents a brief description of the social work profession and social work education at global level. It then traces the development of social work education in India and presents approaches to social work practice, status of training and educational institutions, curriculum and pedagogy, the modes of knowledge development and dissemination and the concept and process of indigenization. The chapter then explains changing patterns of social work education, challenges of diversity and constituents of knowledge. The chapter concludes with the theoretical framework explaining importance of role theory, knowledge theory and critical theory in the context of social work educator’s role in development of IKB.

1.3 Social Work Education: A Global Overview

Being a global profession, education for social work takes place in most of the countries in the world. It has an outreach of around 3000 schools of social work in over 114 countries in the world (Garber 2000; Midgley 2000; IASSW 2000). Besides the regular social work, International social work is taught in schools of social work and cross-national cooperation between training programs is common practice (Hokenstad & Kendall, 1995, Cox and Pawar 2006). Social work profession has been jointly described by the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) and the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) as follows:

‘The social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well being, vitalizing theories of human behavior and social systems. Social work intervenes at the point where people interact with their environments. Principles of human rights and social justice are ‘fundamental to social work’ (IASSW 2000).

The development of social work education is closely linked with the development of social work profession (D’Souza 1978). Basically, in terms of social work profession and social work
education the world is divided into two parts. The Northern part which includes USA, UK and other European countries and the Southern part which comprises Asian, Middle-East Asian, African and other third world nations. It was the social crisis in the Western Europe and North America in the 18th and 19th centuries, which led to the creation of social work as an institution and profession (Kendall 2000a).

This social crisis in the western countries which tore a vent through many western societies in the 18th and 19th centuries is commonly referred to as the ‘industrial revolution’. Rapid industrialization and urbanization transformed the lives of all people (Ibid). Social work emerged as a response to this crisis. State social welfare initiatives such as schemes for public sanitation, education, juvenile correction, public workhouses accompanied with legislation as well as new mechanisms for recording population change originated in the 19th century. The social work activities were financed and run by philanthropic agencies and statutory agencies such as courts, hospitals and workhouses in this period (D’Souza 1978; Nanavatty 1990; Shetty 1996; Gore 1997; Kendall 2000). In 1870s when a scheme for training housing managers responsible to help tenants in Britain was started by Octavia Hill the need for a more systematic training of social work education was felt. As a result systematic training started at Women’s University settlement in London in 1890s (D’souza 1978; Nanavati, 1990). In the USA the first brief training course comprising lectures, observation visits and field work was started by the Charity Organization Society (COS) in 1898. This program ultimately developed into the New York School of Social Work (D’souza 1978; Kendall 2000).

The Second World War had caused much destruction to the peace and harmony in the third world countries. As a result, the UN sent social work consultants from the West to third world countries to provide all kinds of support. These consultants visited different ministries, public and private sectors and NGOs of the third world countries. Based on the observations made by these consultants a twofold system was developed for training the ‘Trained Social Workers’. One to bring the experts from the west, and the other to send the persons from third world countries to the west, who would come back and help their own (Nagpaul 1972; Gore 1997; Mandal 1989) to control and prevent the situation from worsening.

The social work professionals from the west and from the third world countries who were trained in the western countries attempted to develop theories, knowledge and models and started to apply them in the third world countries. But the socio-cultural milieu and indigenous aspects of the third world countries did not match those of the west. Midgley (1981) argued that western
ideas, technologies and institutions replicated in the developing countries were actually to serve the interests of developed countries and establish a new colonialism in a more subtle and effective way in order to have power over them.

1.4 Indigenization Movement and Social Work

The contemporary indigenization movement in social science is a post colonial phenomenon (Boroujerdi 2002; Chang 2005). Atal (1981) argued that the third world suffered both political and academic colonialism because social sciences, like colonialism and capitalism, were implemented from the west to the colonies to secure and perpetuate western power (Huang and Zang 2008). However, some proponents of indigenization attacked the assumptions and principles of western philosophy such as objective, reasons, humanism, the idea of progress, cultural transcending knowledge, the dualism between religion and science. They proposed that new concepts and theories based on indigenous intellectual traditions, history and culture should be developed to build indigenous social sciences. Thus indigenization is a continuous process encompassing broad understandings of knowledge in the present globalized context.

The notion of indigenization appeared in relation to social work for the first time in 1971, when the fifth United Nations International survey of social work training used it to refer to the inappropriateness of American social work theories for other societies. As a result, intellectual movements started throughout the Asian, South-East Asian and Middle East countries against usage of Western models. They emphasized the importance of the social, political, cultural and economic characteristics of a particular country in its region (Walton and Abo El Nasr 1988). According to Yip (2003) indigenization includes awareness about the importance of indigenized culture in social work practice which comprises three different aspects: intervention, ideologies and cultural contexts. All these intermingle with clients and workers backgrounds and cultural exposure.

A tri-dimensional model of indigenization in social work conceptualized by Yip (2006) includes ‘universality and specificity’, ‘dominance and minority’ as well as ‘tradition and present situations’ in regional socio-economic and political context. With this understanding the social work professionals from Asian and African countries started indigenization of the profession by developing own theories, models and knowledge base to maintain a professional standard and to solve their own socio-cultural problems.
In 2002, the joint committee of IASSW and the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) formulated an important document titled ‘Global Qualifying Standards for Social Work Education and Training’ (Sewpaul and Jones 2003) with the aim of setting up a unified standard for social work education for various countries around the world. Based on the feedback from the various parties, the fourth review document ‘International Guidelines for Social Work Education and Training’ (Ibid) was written. Finally the review gradually moved to a tone of ‘guidelines’ for International Social Work (Sewpaul and Jones 2003; Yip 2006). Yip (2006) pointed out that a close look at this document showed that multicultural interaction and exchange amongst different ethnic groups, especially indigenous and authentic nature of social work practice and education within Asian cultural context is not properly addressed. With this the issue of indigenization of social work came to limelight and was discussed across the world.

The process of globalization and the ensuing problems showed that the social work strategies should not only be ‘indigenized’, but should also be ‘internationalized’ for practice and to form the basis for local-level decision making in various systems such as agriculture, health care, food, education, natural-resource management, and a host of other activities in rural and urban communities (Warren 1991).

1.5 The Indian Reality and Development of Social Work Education in India

A renowned Indian sociologist Singh (2006) depicted the reality of Indian society in the following manner. As a nation, India is very diverse in cultural characteristics. Influenced by the West, it is pluralistic and democratic with several political ideologies. Consequently, the Indian social work professionals are faced with an extremely complex reality. There is interplay of many socio, cultural, economic, political and even geographical factors within and from one location to the other. People within India are divided along ethnic, linguistic, cultural, regional, caste and religious lines. India has more than 2000 ethnic groups and sub groups. There are 4693 communities, which include several thousands of endogamous groups, speaking 325 functioning languages and writing 25 different scripts. With 1.19 billion population size, it is characterized by a multi-ethnic, multi cultural, multi lingual and multi religious environment that makes the society highly diverse. To add to the complexity, 72.2 percent of the population lives in about 638,000 villages and the remaining 27.8 percent in over 5100 towns and over 380 urban agglomerations (Singh 2006 in Bodhi 2009).
This diversity is further complicated by the fact that some settlements urbanize, industrialize and modernize faster than others. This intricate mix of tradition and modernity makes it almost impossible to construct one overarching formula to fit all. Further, some sections get politicized faster than others. In this background, one cannot expect one Indian model to suit all the regions (Ejaz 1991; Gore 1997: 2011 (re-print); Kulkarni 2000; Narayan 2008) for social work education and practice.

Historically, systemic discrimination of vulnerable groups was because of their attributes such as religion, caste, sex, ethnicity, age, health and economic background. This has resulted in marginalization of women, dalits, tribal and nomadic communities, landless and small farmers, the labor class, children, youth, and persons with disabilities, mental or terminal illness and others (Desai 1989).

As described in the report titled, ‘Towards People Centered Development Report’ (TISS 1996), together with the corporate sector and the mass media, domination and marginalization was reinforced, violating peoples’ basic rights to food, water and sanitation, livelihood and employment, health, housing, environmental sustainability and basic education. The above problems are aggravated by the production and consumption-based ‘development’ that has widened the disparities and created new hierarchies between and within nations. The policy of liberalization, privatization and globalization, pressured by the international institutions promote minimum government interference and consider market as the sole social regulator. These processes have led to social displacement, environmental devastation and the wiping out of cultural and biological diversity. In such scenario poverty, social conflict and environmental disasters are on the increase. Action groups aiming towards sustainable and people-centered development promoting the values of social equity, local self-governance, democratic pluralism, people’s participation, self-reliance and peace and collaborative social dynamics are emerging in new social movements (Towards People Centered Development Report, TISS Report, 1996). To counter the economic and political forces there is a change in the approaches of social work education and practice which is discussed later in this chapter.

Singh (2006) while explaining the structural facts about the breakdown of what he identifies as “the Indian process of modernization” indentified structural inconsistencies such as ; democratization without spread of civic culture (education), bureaucratization without commitment to universalistic norms, rise in media participation and aspiration or expectation
without proportionate increase in resources and finally modernization without meaningful changes in the stratification system,” quotes Bodhi (2009).

While understanding the reality and complexity of Indian society, with the up-coming socio-economic and political trends and its impact on society, the social work profession has a significant role to play in the context of the resurgence of the civil society. The broad concerns for social work profession are equity, social justice, harmony, directing the activities to support the quest of the marginalized groups to meet their needs (UGC Model Curriculum Report, 2001). Social work professionals are expected to respond to the social realities of the contemporary society. Social work training needs to take note of all these contextual issues to incorporate this in its curriculum, classroom teaching and field practice and research studies to make the learning relevant and more applicable (NAAC Self Study Manual 2005).

1.6 Social Work Training and Institutions of Social Work Education in India: A Profile

In India training for the voluntary social workers started for the first time in 1930 by the Social Service League (SSL) in Mumbai. The services for industrial laboring classes conducted by the Nagpada Neighborhood House highlighted the need for trained workers around that time and this led to the commencement of full-fledged professional education in social work with the establishment of Sir Dorabji Tata Graduate School of Social Work in 1936. This institution was later renamed as the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) (D’Souza 1978; Narayan 2001).

The founding–director of the institute Clifford Manshardt, was an American missionary and J.M. Kumarappa a well-known Indian educator with MA and PhD degrees from Columbia University was his collaborator. Thus the seed of social work profession in colonial India was sown by the American professionals (Kendall 2000). Since then the American–tradition of social work tremendously influenced social work education and training in India (Nagpaul 1972; Mandal 1989; Mohan 2008).

Influence of American model on the pattern of social work education in India was further reinforced by the appointment of an American social worker as a visiting lecturer at Tata Institute, Mumbai (Pathak 1975). Furthermore, Indians trained in professional social work in the USA returned to teach in the Indian school which led to further strengthening of this foreign influence. Finally, fortification of the American model was done with the appointment of a team of American social work educators under the auspices of the US Education Technical Mission.
and the Council of Social Work of the USA (Gore and Gore 1976) to act as consultants to some schools of social work and conduct annual seminars on social work education for the faculties of all the schools of social work in India (D’Souza 1978).

For 11 years from 1936 to 1947 TISS was the only institution for social work training in India till independence. In 1947-48 second school was established for training in social work in Delhi. This was the first institution affiliated to the university system. Most institutions that came into existence in the 60s and 70s were established within the university system (UGC Report 1980; Narayan 2001). There were nine colleges by 1957, 34 by 1975 and by 1990 there were 45 colleges of social work in the country (Desai 1994). In 2000, the total number of institutions reached 106 and by May 2001, this number went up to 120. By the end of 2005, the number of schools of social work was around 220 (SWEPC 2005). At present the exact number is not known but is estimated around 300 or more (NNSSW 2012; Nadkarni 2012).

The field of social work education started expanding with many deemed, central, state and private; universities, colleges and institutions. These educational institutions initiated Bachelor’s Degree (BSW), Master’s Degree in social work (MSW), M.phil, and doctoral program (PhD). The post doctoral study was also offered by some ISWE. However, the second UGC review committee (1980) on social work education recommended focusing more on development of the lower level (graduate and undergraduate) training than higher education. The purpose of this recommendation was to get a bulk of front line workers to make contributions and impact at grass-root levels. However the PhD and M.Phil programs appear to have increased at a faster rate than the bachelor’s degree program (Desai 1994; Narayan 2001; Balkrishnan 2005). The purpose to create higher level study programs was to develop knowledge base to strengthen the social work profession and social work education by generating knowledge through research studies (UGC Report 1980). The ISWE follow different training patterns such as generic, specialization and one which was introduced as concentration. It was made mandatory for the ISWE to practice semester system by the UGC (www.highereducationinindia.com), some ISWE still continued with annual academic pattern.

National Network of Schools of Social Work (NNSSW) document (2012) brought out the issue of mushrooming of private schools of social work, mostly from northern states. The document mentioned that the new institutions were commercializing social work education against the basic ideology of social work. They were self-financed and had expensive fee structures. Some of them
also promoted the concept of paid seats and charged capitation fee to the students. The fieldwork training component in these institutions was, however, weak. Besides this, distance education in social work was also becoming popular. The students were not exposed to fieldwork or research. Consequently, their competency level was low and NGOs paid low salaries to them. Also, the teacher student ratio in some ISWE was highly skewed, especially in the self-financed institutions with high-turnover of teachers in several of these schools because of the low salaries (NNSSW Report 2012).

Issue of rapid increase of the ISWE in the country is frequently discussed by the social work professionals in most of the academic programs. However, it is important to know that region wise density of the ISWE was relatively higher in South and West, lower in the North and least in the North-Eastern region (Desai 1994; Balkrishnan 2006; NNSSW Report 2012). Out of 300 ISWE in India, 67 were located in Maharashtra and 60 in Gujarat. Out of 67 schools in Maharashtra around 51 were located in the Vidharba region of Maharashtra. Thus, more than 40 per cent schools of social work were located in the western region. The picture in North-east was, however, different. In the entire North-East region around eight ISWE offered courses in social work which meant there was not even one ISWE in each state in north-east region. Besides this, the rural and tribal areas were grossly neglected (Desai 1989; Mishra 2005). It is, therefore, relevant to examine the real and logical picture of their growth in terms of geographical coverage. India had the highest number of schools of social work amongst the South East Asian Countries (Narayan 2001). However, the urban-rural imbalance in terms of location of these ISWE was huge in India. The ISWE did not cover the length and breadth of the country and were mostly integrated at higher academic levels in urban university centers (NNSSW Report 2012).

The qualitative academic growth of social work educators and students can be possible only with the availability of sufficient infrastructure facilities and learning resources. A major factor in any organizational set-up is availability of finances to support development of infrastructure such as good library facility, research unit, publication/audio-visual unit, FAP unit, skill and language lab and computer centre to facilitate knowledge generation to strengthen the profession. But such facilities were available only in few ISWE in India (Desai 1994; Narayan 2001; NNSSW Report 2012).

The pattern of funding and the actual financial support received by the ISWE varied depending upon the relationship of the institution with the University and the State (Desai 1994). The pattern
of financing of institutions of higher education between different states, within the same state and among institutions of the same types such as colleges of general education differed greatly (Kaul 1975:127; UGC Report 1980). It was noticed that some ISWE functioned under the Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry and some under the Education Ministry. The ISWE were affiliated to State, Central and Deemed universities and functioned as department of university, college or single faculty college. State run university colleges suffered more financial constraints due to delay in supply of grants by the concerned departments. Several un-aided substandard institutions were established without ensuring adequate finances, infrastructural support, and status of training and practical experience of staff employed as educators (UGC Report 1980; Narayan 2001). Thus, though the social work training started in India in the beginning of the 20th century the profession is still considered as evolving for above reasons and needs improvement in all areas.

1.7 Social Work Training Curriculum and Pedagogy

The objective of any professional curriculum has to be to prepare the type and quality of manpower capable of performing the task and functions to achieve the goals of the profession in the context of that particular society which it seeks to serve (UGC Report 1980). Thus a profession prepares its members to practice what is clearly defined. Curriculum design is circumscribed by time, place and the prevailing social, political, economic and cultural context of the country. Curriculum development for social work education is a process of inter-relating and integrating the basic constituents of professional education, namely, context, purpose, structure, content, practice and process (Nanavatty 1990).

According to the second UGC review committee (1980), existing syllabi for social work training were not relevant to the profile of the country and hardly had any scope for practice. Social work curricula of that time lacked response to the Indian realities and over emphasized the remedial, rehabilitative, residual model which focused on problems of the individual, families and communities at micro level rather than problems of individual and society in the context of development. The social work experts suggested that in order to be useful, the professional education must have an effective linkage with practice to respond to current social realities. Therefore, a critical appraisal of all these aspects of professional training was felt necessary (Desai 1981; Verma 2003).

Considering the fact that the task of curriculum designing is a specialized task, the UGC started Curriculum Development Centers (CDC) for all subjects to evolve a standard outline of a subject
curriculum to be followed nationally with some modifications. The CDC for social work education submitted its report in 1980. This report published by the UGC after ten years in 1990 focused on the need for establishing a well equipped library in each college, and for translating core literature in local language to strengthen social work training. It was suggested to include the following broad areas in social work curriculum at post graduate level.

1. Social work Profession: Philosophy and Concepts
2. Social Work Interventions: Methods and Strategies
3. Social Work Research
4. Social Science Concepts for Social Workers
5. Human Development and Health
6. Social Systems and Social Conflict
7. Social Development, Policy and Planning
8. Social Work Practicum including fieldwork (filed visits; structured experience laboratory; study tour; rural camp; workshops; concurrent field work; block fieldwork)
9. Optional courses

A Cell for Social Work Education and Practice (SWEPC) sanctioned by the UGC was set up at the TISS in 1992. This Cell was an outcome of the project on Curriculum Development for Social Work Education (CDSWE). The goals of the cell were the development of curriculum for social work education through (a) development and maintenance of data bank; (b) development of curriculum and training/learning tools; (c) faculty training through various programs and distance modes; (d) research and dissemination; (e) support and consultation (Desai 2004). In this background, the Social Work Education: UGC Model Curriculum 2001 has been designed by the senior most, experienced social work educators and circumscribed in the Indian context.

The three domains prescribed in the UGC Model Curriculum (2001) are the Core Domain, the Supportive Domain, and the Interdisciplinary Domain. The fourth cluster is the Elective Content. The Core Domain of social work education focuses on the profession’s philosophy, ideology, practice, values, ethics, theory and concepts. The Supportive domain focuses on knowledge and skills to assist the Core Domain. The Interdisciplinary Domain has relevant theories, concepts and perspectives from other sciences to help understand the social situation. Elective courses have the required theory base of that specific field. UGC Curriculum Report (2001) model was expected to be used by all social work educational institutions to ensure some uniform standards and relevance of social work practice to social work Education.
It was noticed that in the regional meeting organized by the NNSSW (2012) some of the ISWE representatives mentioned that the curriculum for social work requires up-gradation in changing situation focusing on the knowledge, skills and ideology of social work. The challenges faced by the schools of social work include extreme variation in the social work curriculum in different schools. Meenai (2012) pointed out that most of the curricula were being influenced heavily by the market and the availability of jobs. It was suggested to strategize the curriculum with respect to providing a rural exposure to the students in their training and also look at specializations in accordance with the local context. The strategy should be such that certain minimum standards and uniformity are maintained and at the same time scope for creativity and innovation with respect to the local context, due to the dynamic nature of social work practice is maintained.

The professionals suggested introducing electives focusing on specializations covering the knowledge component areas such as culture, social structure, human psychology, planning and administration, and the current trends such as globalization, feminism, post-modernism, multiculturalism, models of social development, and fields of social work. The skills component should look at those skills which are helpful in application of methods of social work and are also useful in new emerging areas for social work such as project management. Ideologies should include Humanistic Perspectives, Empowerment Thought, Liberation Ideas, Human Rights and Ambedkar’s Thoughts. The participants of the regional meeting of NNSWE (2012) asserted that the national network should ensure uniform curriculum for all the schools of social work in the country but at the same time certain degree of flexibility should be allowed to meet the regional differences (Soreng 2012). Looking at the skills component of social work training certain strategies should be made to relook at the pedagogy in terms of more innovation. An area which needs more attention in social work education to develop a sound contextual and theoretical base for the profession is the research. This needs to be considered seriously as lack of theory building in the profession hinders its growth.

1.8 Approaches to Social Work Education and Practice

Journey of social work approaches from philanthropic work to rights based approach and people centric movements in almost all the continents indicate that the praxis of social work in many countries was rooted in the indigenous values, knowledge and philosophy of the culture of the communities and was conducive to promote human right approach. To make the knowledge contextual for its appropriate application it is necessary that knowledge is made indigenous (Pandya 2009).
The history of social work in itself contain ‘epistemic shift’ in keeping with the larger paradigm and scientific revolution. The commencing point of deliberation on ideology and social work is an overview of shift in practice position (welfare-clinical-ecological-developmental-radical-feminist-postmodern). This is further churned through discourses on ideology that forms the base for the positions. The basic premise of social theory is to deliberate on nature of social reality, epistemology and social practice. This provides insight into world views, hegemony and power and emancipator discourses. This has significant relevance for social work epistemology in terms of endowing a theoretical base to dimension of ideologies and perspectives-the normative and ideational base for practice (Ibid).

The clinical approach primarily aims at the problem solving at the personal and interpersonal level and at improving individual social functioning (Skidmore, et al 1991). This includes treatment of psychosocial dysfunction, emotional and mental disorders. This approach did not fit in India for long time as regular social work practice. India being a Welfare state followed the welfare approach initially. This approach focused largely on services for the poor, handicapped, and vulnerable groups. The goal was largely relief. However, later this approach also included preventive and rehabilitative goals and embraced the areas of health, education and cooperation (Gore 1965, 2011; Narayan 2001).

The radical and empowerment views take up the alternative, conflict conception of society and the consequences for power and control in social work. The ‘oppression’ thesis states that significant part of the society is oppressed by social relations which act always to oppress people on basis of class, race, gender, disability, age and sexual orientation (Payne 1996). In such situations, social workers are political change agents where they tend to view problems experienced by individuals as a consequences of structural inequalities, oppression and social deprivation. The solutions rest on empowering the individual problems emerged (Wagner 1989; Fook 1993). The structural approach to practice (Goldberg and Middleman 1974; Moreau 1979; Mullaly 1993) also focuses on direct practice with the powerless and oppressed. For example Freire influenced radical social work in Latin America using the empowerment approach during the sixties and seventies and this led to a re-conceptualization of social work in Latin America (Brigham 1977; Lusk 1981) and other developing countries (Narayan 2005).

Beginning with theological discourses (faith movement) the shift was towards realist–rationalist aspect of practice encompassed under the welfare-clinical positions. The post structuralists turn, commencing with Foucault, elevate the discourses on human rights and with post colonial tenets
towards social reforms, Gandhi and nationalist discourses in the indigenous context. Subaltern and gender dimensions emerged with discussion on anti caste, Dalit and Women’s movements. The post modern turn is reflected through the ray of new social movement that reflects the plurality of voices and the micro politics of power (Pandya 2009)

Since its inception the social work profession in India has been practicing various approaches. Gore (1965, 2011) has described the order in which social work education in India began with the religious traditional approach, the liberal reformist approach, the secular missionary approach, the ethical revolutionary approach and professional social work approach.

While understanding the realities and reflecting on the challenges facing Indian society, social work professionals from India gradually became aware of the facts and made situational changes in the approaches to social work education and practice to make it more contextual and indigenous.

1.9 Changing Patterns of Social Work Education: Contextual Shift

The indigenization of social work practice is challenged by the globalization of economies and technologies as well as the diversity of culture, traditions, ethnicities and religions in various regions of the world (Yip 2006). Social work professionals in various countries also face diversity in religion, traditional believes, culture and social developments. Social work practice with Eurocentric groups is different from social work practice with Asian ethnic groups. This diversity of traditional culture makes multicultural social work practice complicated and difficult. A similar situation occurs in the countries across Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Indigenized social work practice with one ethnic group may not suit and be applicable to another. An overview of the changing patterns of social work education, resulting from the changing context of socio-economic and political systems in different developing countries gives following five clear indications (Ibid).

a) The prevalent model of social work education in developed countries does not suit the requirements of developing countries.

b) The model of social work education must suit the historical and cultural roots of each country.

c) It should meet the socio-economic requirements of majority population of the country, especially the challenge of poverty.
d) The purpose of development should be clearly defined, keeping in view the existing realities and the future line of social change, and
e) The structure, content and process of social work education, should be related to the purpose, and their implication in the field be kept under constant review.

The issue of indigenization needs to be addressed if knowledge production and development are to progress. Firstly, there is a need to address the tension and hostility between social work educators and practitioners. Secondly, though there is a lot of literature in the core subject such as case work, group work and community organization, there are very few contemporary indigenous texts on this subject. Most schools still refer to the old western text for this subject. One strategy to address these issues could be to form a small core group of educators trained in editing and writing skills that could be available to practitioners. Another strategy could be for a teacher to teach a core course for several years and during this period document the teaching material to produce the indigenous text (Desai 2004).

There is a need to change the approach from group scientism to people’s centeredness in journals of social work. There is also a need to focus on unpublished NGO material and material in regional language which is very useful for knowledge enrichment.

Besides this, some other indigenous sources from which social work knowledge can be produced by institutions of social work education are:

- Dialogues and discussions between social work and allied disciplines, academicians, practitioners and activists to generate areas for research and long term partnership
- Adaptation of knowledge from social sciences for social work.
- Student’s field work assignments and practice based research.
- Validation of theories /models of intervention through action research.

Knowledge as an individual, organizational and societal resource is stronger today than at any other time in history. The meaning, validity and use of knowledge depend upon the ideological perspective for development of knowledge. Knowledge reflects the dominant ideology in society and has the power to contribute to social transformation. It is therefore a major social responsibility to ensure development and dissemination of socially transformative knowledge (Mayo 1999). Such knowledge development is particularly important for profession like social work, which has social responsibility at its core.
1.10 Social Work Educator- as Bearer of Knowledge

'Social Work Educator' means an academician, faculty member or teacher who holds a prescribed social work qualification and has been engaged in teaching, research and fieldwork supervision in a recognized social work educational institution (NCSWPI Bill 1993). Qualifications in social work such as Master in Social Work (MSW) or M.A. in social work are one of the eligibility criteria for entry in the social work teaching profession. Attending Orientation Courses and Refresher Courses was one of the mandatory requirements for career progression as per the University rules (UGC 2010).

Direct recruitment to the posts of Assistant Professors, Associate Professors and Professors in the Universities and Colleges are made on the basis of merit. In a move to improve the quality of higher education the University Grants Commission (UGC) had issued a new regulation for teacher’s recruitment and promotion on June 2010. According to this regulation, good academic record, 55 percent marks at the Master’s level and qualifying in the National Eligibility Test (NET), or an accredited test (State Level Eligibility Test - SLET/SET) was a precondition for appointment to the post of Assistant Professor. Higher educational qualification, such as Ph.D. in the concerned discipline, engagement in research with evidence of published work with books or research/policy papers were part of the eligibility requirements for the post of Associate professor and professor (nehu.ac.in). Significant contributions to the knowledge in the concerned discipline substantiated by credentials were also laid down as the pre condition for appointment of professor (Ibid).

Educators are the bearer of knowledge and develop knowledge through the teaching-learning experiences. While discussing the role of Indian social work educators as academics and scholars Pathak (2000) expressed that SWEs are expected to play the major role of knowledge generator. To strengthen the profession, emphasis of educators’ role should be as knowledge worker and consultant than being mere practice wisdom teacher. One of the basic requirements of knowledge development for social work training and practice is to understand the role of the social work educator and find out the mechanism to recognize their contribution at various levels (Srivastav 1995; Varma 2003). For this reason, their responsibilities, participation, involvement, initiation, experiences, use of knowledge and interventions at local, national and international level needs to be made noticeable. With regards to the knowledge base for social work education there is a strong requirement of producing, categorizing, sorting, concretizing and organizing the
knowledge base systematically by creating various models (Desai M.2004; Vijayalaxmi 2004; Agarwal, Kumar and Kumar 2008).

According to Pathak (2000) few SWEs had developed a high sense of commitment to their work by developing knowledge to strengthen social work profession. However, amongst them, those who wrote and published were very few. According to him, the published work so far was mostly due to career compulsions to become eligible for further promotions in service as readers and professors.

Educators play a pivotal role in identifying and explaining the knowledge that can guide students for social work practice (Osmond 2005). To strengthen the profession social work knowledge has to be rooted within the local cultural context. Efforts in this direction can be made by the educators to generate knowledge which is based on social sciences, western social work theories, practice wisdom and indigenous knowledge (Mattaini 1995; Vijayalaxmi 2004).

1.11 Knowledge base for Social Work Education and Practice

An academic definition of ‘what is knowledge’ is not operative in a people centered discipline like social work profession. Social work knowledge is decided by the professionals in its use in the way they can process it as information and relate it to their environment, political, social and cultural practices (Desai, M. 2004). Acquiring knowledge is a much more in-depth undertaking than theorizing because knowledge involves gathering, analyzing and synthesizing understanding, hypothesis or judgment. However, in some contexts, the emphasis on understanding or knowing about something means the ability to put that knowledge into action. In social work, knowledge needs to incorporate both ‘practical and theoretical knowledge’ (Polanyi 1967) knowing about and knowing how. This emphasizes the importance of ‘a theory of action’ (Eraut 1994:29).

Social work bases its methodology on a systematic body of evidence based knowledge derived from research and practice evaluation, including local and indigenous knowledge specific to the context. It recognizes the complexity of interactions between human beings and their environment. The social work profession draws on theories of human development and behavior and social systems to analyze complex situations and to facilitate individual, organizational, social and cultural changes (IASSW&IFSW: 2000). The knowledge base of social work is a composite of the following:

i) Knowledge produced indigenously by social work professionals themselves.

ii) Knowledge derived predominately from other disciplines like sociology, psychology and philosophy by analyzing.
iii) Knowledge derived from evaluating the field experiences of social work professionals.

Besides this kind of knowledge, social workers/educators base their work on practice wisdom and their own life experiences related to their personal and professional characteristics. The social work profession needs different types of knowledge to cater to different functions of practice, policy planning and administration, research, education, and training. Social work practitioners need transformative knowledge to understand exclusion and the knowledge domain of people they work with and the knowledge needed for inclusion of the people. The professionals need to update themselves with developments in the field that impinge upon their practice. Social work educators need to know the latest knowledge developed to update their curriculum and to recommend reading material to the students for their assignments and examinations. The social work researchers need to comprehensively know the state of art of research in the field (Desai M. 2004). Thus, the social work profession needs following different types of knowledge.

• Information on social work, welfare and development,
• Social work research,
• Organized social work knowledge for practice,
• Policy planning and administration, education, training and research
• Bibliographic resources on social science, development studies and social work literature (Ibid).

It is important to look at how social work knowledge, particularly social work theory has been defined and conceptualized. Theory allows to critically examine common-sense ways of seeing and doing things (Thompson 1995). Thus, theory can enable to critically review assumptions and accepted ways of doing things that work to the disadvantage of service users. In this way, theory can enhance capacity to explore a broader range of practice options than would be evident from a common-sense viewpoint (Healy 2005: 95).

Knowledge and theory are used interchangeably. But they are rarely defined in social work texts and in the guidance documents that regulate social work education. The theoretical and practical understanding of a subject and theory is a system of ideas intended to explain something (Pearsall and Hanks, 2003). According to Payne (2005) a theory is an organized statement of ideas about the world. Fook (2002) argues that even putting names to things helps to provide explanation and understanding in practice. Many different ideas and ways of expressing them are relevant to practice. In social work, the term ‘theory’ covers three different possibilities.
• **Models** - Models describe what happens during practice in a general way and in a structured form in a wide range of situations so that certain principles and patterns of activity are extracted to give practice the consistency. Models help to structure and organize a complicated situation.

• **Perspectives** - Perspectives help one to think about what is happening in an organized way. Applying different perspectives can help to see situations from different points of view. An example is the feminist perspective.

• **Theory** - Theory accounts for why an action results in or causes particular consequences and identifies the circumstances in which it does so. Some writers reserve the word ‘theory’ to ideas that offer this casual explanation. To them, theories have to tell you ‘what works’. Cognitive-behavioral theory is an example of explanatory theory.

Perspective and models are necessary in theory for it to be useful in practice. Because social work is practical action in a complex world, a theory or perspective must offer a model of explicit guidance. Model and explanatory theory can only gain consistency over a wide range of social work and offer general usefulness if they offer a view of the world which allows transfer of ideas between one situation and the other and order a pattern of work (Payne 1997).

1.12 Social Sciences, Western Social Work Writings and Praxis Wisdom: Basis of Social Work Knowledge

Social work knowledge is the knowledge developed within the context of socio-economic and political situation of the society. However, significant amount of social work knowledge is borrowed from a number of other disciplines. Most of the social work theories are derived from social sciences (Yellowy and Henkel 2002). It is important to note that these disciplines were originally developed based on western assumptions of human behavior and therefore tend to be Eurocentric (Robinson 1995).

Kulkarni, (2000) referred to social work as applied social science because according to him the knowledge of social work methods and techniques was derived from one or more social sciences. The author emphasized that the relationship of social science to social work is umbilical or to put it differently, social work is applied social sciences. According to him applied syllabus for social work training can be prepared realistically and taught effectively only by the teachers having direct exposure to socio-economic problems in the field and sound theoretical knowledge of social science disciplines.
Each discipline of social sciences has several specialist lines of enquiry that reflect specific areas of interest or methods of investigation. Psychology defined as the ‘science of behavior and mental processes’ is the most borrowed discipline in social work (Hockenbury and Hockenbury 2002). Alongside psychology, sociology is ‘one of the defining academic disciplines of social work’ (Pierson and Thomas 2002) and focuses on the relationship between the individual and his or her social context. Sociology is concerned with examining how people order their lives within the structural constraints of their setting (Allan 2000).

Social work is regulated by legal mandate which means that the law ‘determines the powers and duties with which social work is endowed’ (Roberts and Peterson 2000). The social policy which emerged from social administration initially focused on the institutional areas of housing, health, education and the personal social services (Stewart 2000a:322). According to Giddens (2001), politics concerns the means whereby power is used to affect the scope and content of governmental activities whereas political science is the study of the organizations and conduct of government (Bullock and Trombley 2000A). Economics is the study of the production, distribution and consumption of wealth in human society (Bannock et al. 1998). Its importance since the 1990s is evident in the ‘marketization’ of social work and the development of managerialism. Philosophical investigation includes epistemology, semantics, metaphysics, logic and ethics. These subjects are relevant to social work in terms of theory of knowledge, how knowledge is acquired and used (epistemology); the meaning communicated in terms of language (semantics); how we come to ‘be’ and ‘know’ and how to understand reality (metaphysics); the reasoning used in thought processes and decision-making (logic); the professional and personal moral values that we, and others, adopt in our work and everyday lives (ethics).

Western literature developed and disseminated by the western social work professionals based on their socio-cultural background is called the western social work literature. It is often stressed that the social work professionals/educators in the country rely excessively on British and American literature. The western literature is more advanced, systematic but more clinical therapeutic oriented, focused on individual approach and hence not suitable to Indian context and other developing countries. It is based on theories such as Psychoanalytical theory, Systems approach, Casework models. According to Siddique (2003) the American hangover continues to dominate the domain of social work education in India as the IKB is yet to reach the desired level to strengthen social work profession in India.
Thus, application of literature based on purely allied social sciences and western knowledge in social work education sometimes becomes unrealistic and challenging for social work educators and practitioners (Punita 2003).

Healy (2001) affirmed that mutual exchange and reciprocity are essential to any exchange of social work knowledge. Tsang (1997) stated that social workers in non-western cultures can learn from the pitfalls encountered by western social workers. However, continual exportation of western social work knowledge by western social workers and social work institutions and the acceptance of western social work knowledge base by non-western social work practitioners and academics need to be persistently challenged, Midgley (1981:4).

Most of the social work theories are derived from social sciences and there is disagreement as to the methods of social work intervention and relevance of the theories from which they are derived (Yelloly and Henkel 2002). Theories for practice draw substantially on discourses drawn from other disciplines and fields of service activities. For example, anti-oppressive practice draws on ideas from sociological discourse. In the process of creating theories for practice, social workers transform ideas from service discourse for practice in specific contexts of social work practice. Theories for social work practice are usually developed within actual or intended contexts of practice. Thus, in the process of theory development, ideas from service discourses, are combined with social workers’ specific purposes and experiences within particular practice contexts (Healy 2005:93).

Elucidating the term ‘theory’, Prasad (2003) contends that as compared to its meaning and use in natural and physical sciences, the term is used loosely in social and behavioral sciences and in ‘practice of social work profession’. According to him the use of social work theories in professional literature is rather ambiguous and sometimes the concept, frames of reference, practice model and philosophical proposition have been termed ‘theory (ies).’ Some social work practitioners maintain that due to the very nature of fast changing society- social relations, social institutions, culture, economy and polity, attitudes and behavior patterns, dynamics of client-practitioner relationship and very eclectic nature of the profession, theory has no value in professional practice. However, there is little appreciation of relationship between theory, knowledge and practice of social work all over.
1.13 Modes of Knowledge Development and Dissemination

There is criticism on oral tradition of knowledge development and dissemination for social education and practice (Kirk and Reid 2002). Social work professionals’ do use and create knowledge in practice but, by and large, this knowledge work occurs informally and remains in the heads of individual or is transferred orally (Ibid). The informal and individualistic character of this knowledge means that it is unavailable to the social work profession more broadly and can be used in only very limited ways in educational processes (Ibid). Social work professionals oral tradition of knowledge development and dissemination on the grounds that as long as observations are communicated only informally, verbally, and among a few colleagues, they remain apart from the profession’s established knowledge. Adding to the knowledge base involves making thoughtful, written contributions to the literature.

In addition, while informal knowledge remains inside our heads, we fail to subject it to the external scrutiny required to further our understanding of its strengths and limitations both within our practice context and across other sites of service provision. In other words, informal knowledge-building processes allow us great deal of freedom, but they can also foster delusion about effectiveness in achieving practice purpose (Healy 2005).

From the proceedings of a workshop conducted for the educators to make them understand the publishing process and to help them to develop ideas for publications and acquire writing skills that would lead to successful publication of material derived from their work, Norton (2004:88) shared the ideas, experiences and aspirations of the participant professionals about knowledge development process in the following words;

- Many faculty had aspirations that their work could generate material for publication,
- Most had little idea as to how to do this,
- Most had little grasp of publication process, and what would be of interest to readers, and
- Most had experience of writing thesis and contributing to journals, but generally people’s writing skills for a wider readership were not particularly good.

Norton asserts that, publication of conferences/workshops/seminars report is a big problem as a number of them are being published by academic institutions, NGOs and conference organizers. Publishing these reports is often seen as an easy option for creating a publication. Most organizations did not give sufficient importance to words. They did not make connections
between information that gives people the power to take control over their own lives, know their rights and deal with the problems and confront them in life.

The modes of dissemination of knowledge are diverse and include traditional textual outlet such as books and articles, relational outlets such as informal conversation with colleagues, formal consultations, continuing education workshops and seminars and electronic outlets such as internet sites, electronic journals and conferences. Social work education is a powerful and significant dissemination enterprise that includes both textual and relational sources. The market for social work books and journals is limited as their major consumers are libraries of institutions for social work education. Book stores are not interested in selling such specific areas of literature. General impression is that social work educators, students and practitioners do not buy books or subscribe to journals. Hence, if relevant social work knowledge is developed, efforts need to be made to publicize it among the appropriate users and motivate them to buy it (Desai, M. 2004; Pradhan, 2012).

1.14 Social Work Educators’ Role in Development of Indigenous Knowledge: Overarching Theoretical framework

The social work profession is purely human oriented and is directly concerned with human problems. Education in social work is a foundation for development of social work profession. Social work educator’s role in general refers to their workload assigned by the social work educational institution. Singh (2008) stated that the development of education system depends on the role played by the planners, administrators, educationists and especially the teachers. Accordingly the social work educator has a vital role to play in determining the standards and quality of training for strengthening the profession. Usually, active participation and regular involvement of a teacher in classroom teaching is one of the major roles of the teacher besides other roles.

The UGC Review Committee Report of 1980 and ‘Curriculum Report: UGC Model, 2001’ has allocated various responsibilities to the social work educator to perform their role. Besides teaching in the classroom, the role of SWE includes supervising students for field work, guiding their term paper/research and seminar presentations, directing research and field action projects (FAP), organizing seminars, workshops, conferences, camps, staff development program, heading and participating in the activities of NGOs and professional associations, if selected, be a member of board of studies of the university, university grants commission (UGC), handle other
administrative responsibilities at the department/college level, develop and modify curriculum, prepare proposals and policy drafts and also write and publish papers, articles, monographs, books, compendiums and editorship to generate knowledge base (UGC Report 1965: UGC Report 1980: SAQSWES Report, 2003: Desai, M. 2004). This diverse role enables the social work educator to gain theoretical understanding and praxis wisdom which creates opportunity to generate contextual knowledge which is indigenous. (Desai A. 1994; Desai, M. 2004; Vijayalaxmi 2004). Besides, establishing linkages between theory and practice wisdom based on experiences of teaching and practicing, writing, publishing and disseminating knowledge is also an important part of the SWE’s role.

Satisfactory performance of these responsibilities attached to the role of social work educator depends on the personal and professional background of SWEs, their interest, initiative, competence, peer interactions, role models, infrastructure facilities, opportunity and access, involvement with professional and other organizations of social work. Similarly, the SWEs understanding of knowledge base such as allied social sciences, Western social work theories, practice wisdom and indigenous knowledge varies from individual to individual and influences SWEs role, involvement and efforts in developing IKB.

In this background, to study the role of the social work educator in knowledge development to strengthen the social work profession, the contributions made by them and the constraints and challenges faced by them in the process is appropriate to know the theories like role theory, knowledge theory and critical theory in context of this study.

1.14.1 Role Theory

Role theory in general refers to the everyday activity performed by an individual to discharge her /his workload in a given situation (Robbins and Sanghi 2007). This theory is important because it is about interactions of an individual with others and how their expectations and reactions cause to respond in characteristic ways. It offers social explanations complementing psychological understanding of personality (Strean 1971: Biddle and Thomas 1979, Davis 1996 in Payne 2005. p168). As per the role theory, development of education system and knowledge depends on the role played by its educationist, especially the teachers (Singh, 2008).

The role of social work educator thus depends upon their academic involvement and everyday activity performed by them at the department/college level as per the guidelines given in UGC review committee report (1980), Curriculum: UGC Model, (2001) and National Standards for
Assessment of Quality in Social Work Education Report (2003). Further, personal and professional characteristics of the social work educators, their role, responsibility, interaction, and interest in the profession gives rise to some expectations from them for development of knowledge based on their experiences as a teacher/educator.

1.14.2 Theory of Knowledge

Theory of knowledge”, called “epistemology” defined narrowly is the study of knowledge and justified belief. As the study of knowledge is concerned with the questions such as ‘What are the necessary and sufficient conditions of knowledge? What are its sources? What is its structure, and what are its limits?’ (http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/epistemology/). This understanding is rather significant aspect of this study. Thus, some relevant parts of theory on ‘knowledge’ will be presented in this part, to enhance perception of the reader for in-depth understanding on various perspectives of ‘knowledge’.

The Oxford Dictionary defines knowledge as ‘facts, information and skills acquired through experience or education. According to Aristotle's and Aquinas' complete knowledge or knowledge in the fullest sense (systematic, scientific knowledge) involves the construction of a systematic hierarchy of valid syllogism, which demonstrate and explain the truth of its conclusions on the basis of general premises known to be true. Kant agrees with empiricism that all knowledge arises with perceptual experience. However, the fact that it arises with perceptual experience does not entail that all knowledge derives from perceptual experience. (Kaplan 2003. www.wou.edu/las/humanities).

Application of knowledge yields expertise, and additional analytical or experimental insights are said to constitute instances of wisdom (Britannica 2001 in Desai,2004). T.S.Eliot a great poet’s quote, where is the wisdom, we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge, we have lost in information?,’” makes us understand the importance of information, knowledge and wisdom for practice and further explains that ‘Knowledge’ is not value free as it implies power (Desai, M. 2004). Mattaini (1995) who states that practice wisdom is knowledge passed from one generation of social workers/educators to the other, sometimes as a form of oral tradition, has identified two types of practice wisdom;

i) Explicit rules that are handed down by experienced practitioner to others, and

ii) Patterns of professional behavior shaped and refined over years of practice and served as model for other workers.
An important issue in epistemology concerns the ultimate source of our knowledge. There are two traditions: rationalism that is primarily based in reason and empiricism which holds that the knowledge is primarily based in experience. Although the modern scientific worldview borrows heavily from empiricism, there are reasons for thinking that a synthesis of the two traditions is more plausible than either of them individually (www.theoryofknowledge.info / 29/5/12)

**Rationalism:** True knowledge or the most important knowledge is essentially independent of sensory experience. Although rationalists often distinguish sense perception from true knowledge (episteme), all regard sense perception as more than mere opinion and as the source of our knowledge of tangible, physical things.

**Empiricism:** Knowledge about the world that is about reality beyond the mind is discovered by empirical research by observation, generalization, and experimentation and not by reason operating independently from sense perception (http://www.wou.edu/las/humanities/cannon/know.htm). Combinations or fusions of rationalism and empiricism are possible (Aristotle, Kant in Kaplan 2004). Learning of new knowledge is dependent of what is already known is the primary idea, (Kaplan 2004). In other words, construction of knowledge begins with our observation, experience and recognition of events and objects through concepts we already possess. We learn by constructing a network of concepts and adding to them (www.spjc.edu/SPG/Science).

**Constructivism:** Constructivism is generally considered to reflect a postmodern view of knowledge. It views knowledge as a product of reality. Constructivists consider learning to be an active process where knowledge is contextualized rather than acquired. Personal experiences guide the construction of knowledge. Learners continuously test their knowledge construction through social negotiation. The learner brings past experiences and cultural factors to a situation. (Vygotsky and Bruner in Leonard, 2002) contribute unique constructivist approaches that are worthy of consideration when discussing construction of virtual learning environments; (Ibid) for his belief in the social construction of knowledge and leadership in discovering learning for personal knowledge.

**Tacit Knowledge:** Concept of tacit knowledge was introduced by Philosopher Michael Polanyi (1891-1976). Tacit knowledge is integral to the entirety of a person’s consciousness, is acquired largely through association with other people, and requires joint or shared activities to be imparted from one to another. The tacit dimension also called informal knowledge.
Tacit knowledge as opposed to formal, codified or explicit knowledge is a kind of knowledge that is difficult to transfer to another person by means of writing it down or verbalizing it. While tacit knowledge appears to be simple, it has far reaching consequences and is not widely understood. Tacit knowledge is messy, difficult to study, regarded as being of negligible epistemic worth. So tacit knowledge is knowledge we have, and know we have, but cannot put into words that is not captured by language Polanyi (1967).

Tacit knowledge comprises a range of conceptual and sensory information and images that can be brought to bear in an attempt to make sense of something (Hodgkin 1991). In order to strengthen social work profession many bits of tacit knowledge based on the classroom teaching and praxis wisdom can be brought together to help form a new model or theory to strengthen social work training and practice.

Thus, much of the knowledge does come through our senses, through perception. Perception is a complex process. The way we experience the world may be determined in part by the world, but it is also determined in part by us. We do not passively receive information through our senses; arguably, we contribute just as much to our experiences as do the objects that are experienced of. How we are to understand the process of perception, and how this should affect our understanding of the world that we inhabit is, therefore, vital for epistemology (www.theoryofknowledge.info/retrieved on 29/5/12).

1.14.3 Critical Theory

Critical theory is a term that embraces a variety of different theoretical positions (Alway 1995). Critical theory seeks to question the very institutions and societal structures that cause the oppression and which prevent humans from fulfilling their creative potentials in life. Critical theory asks important hidden and subtle political, social, and economic questions underlying the area being researched to allow a new critical consciousness to emerge and appropriate social action to take place during and as a result of the research process (Gramsci 1971). Gramsci, refers to critical education as a means for an overall strategy for social transformation (Mayo 1999). His belief that educational systems are not neutral and serve the existing hegemonic group/forces is helpful in understanding the regional process. To Gramsci, true education is a critical/political approach to knowledge tied to praxis; the two cannot be separated. It is a creative exercise through spontaneous and autonomous learning with the teacher as a guide (Ibid).
At a broader level, critical theory has involved a variety of analyses, which have endeavored to link the concern with subjectivity with the structural focus on the social and political context of people’s lives (Thompson 2000). From the point of view of critical theorists, contemporary Marxists neglected the impact of dominant ideologies upon people’s consciousness. Unlike structuralists Marxists, who spoke about the inevitability of the structural contradictions of capitalism in bringing about transformation, critical theorists stressed the importance of people’s agency—that is, their capacity to be actively involved in the process of social change (Alway 1995). Importance is placed on the objectivity of knowledge, the universality of values and the progress of science and society, and truth is centered in human reason (Seidman 1994; Parton & O’Byrne 2001). Modernity’s ‘grand narrative’ (the form of knowledge seen as legitimate) is emancipation of all people and production of a universal knowledge that speaks for all.

According to the critical theorists Toohey (1999) practice wisdom is historically, socially, economically and politically conditioned. According to Giroux (1999) critical pedagogy attempts to do the following:

- Create new forms of knowledge through its emphasis on breaking on disciplines and creating inter-disciplinary knowledge.
- Raise questions about the relationships between the margins and centers of power in schools and is concerned about how to provide a way of reading history as part of a larger project of reclaiming power and identity, particularly as these are shaped around the categories of race, gender, class and ethnicity.
- Reject the distinction between high and popular culture so as to make curriculum knowledge responsive to the everyday knowledge that constitutes peoples’ lived histories differently.
- Illuminate the primacy of the ethical in defining the language that teachers and others use to produce particular cultural practices.

The rich knowledge base of social work professionals is predominantly derived from practice wisdom, which means that the professionals can position themselves as critical ethnographers, participant observers in their work where they are witness to the impact of subjugation, oppression, racism and structural disadvantage (Kreitzer 2004). Critical theories, including post colonialist, anti-oppressive and anti-racist ideals, can assist in working towards emancipation and liberation (Mullaly 2007). Through the connections and observations, there is the prospect to challenge the taken-for-granted ways of doing things, which for practitioners may equate with
complacency or unquestioning compliance. This means that social workers need to move to the centre stage of activism in order to position themselves as key actors in the policy realm (Introducing critical theories for social work in a neo-liberal context) (Ibid).

Regional and international writers have produced critical texts in social work over the last six years that have influenced curriculum content in social work courses. Critical theory thus places a significant emphasis on reflecting upon how dominant ideologies or ways of thinking, as well as societal institutions, impact on people’s lives. Critical theory also questions the place of existing institutions, such as the family, educational establishments and governance, with a view to constructing a more just society (Mulley 2007).

1.15 Conclusion

Professions based on human relationship such as social work must have its knowledge base truly reflecting values, culture, problems of society in which it has to be taught and practiced. About social work education in India, it will be inappropriate to say that social work educators have not responded to the need of indigenizing social work knowledge. It, however, is seen in the writings of the professionals that there is need of IKB and its dissemination. However, it was found that systematic attempts were not made to ascertain the reasons for dearth of indigenous knowledge in India. In fact, the time is apt that factors inhibiting growth of IKB are systematically studied, documented and addressed so that development of IKB can get momentum for its visibility. The basic issue of ‘availability of IKB’ does not remain only point of debate but of directions for further development of IKB for social work education in India. In this backdrop, an attempt is made in the next chapter titled, ‘Availability of IKB for Social Work Education in India: Review of literature’ to review the efforts made by Indian social work professionals to generate indigenous knowledge for social work education and training.