

**SPIRITUALITY AS A GUIDING PARADIGM IN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN
A RURAL CONTEXT IN INDIA**

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DECLARATION

I, Shannal Rowkith, declare that the research reported in this dissertation is my original work, except where otherwise indicated. All sources used or cited have been explicitly acknowledged by means of complete references. This work has not been submitted previously to the Durban University of Technology or to any other institution for any purpose.

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ABSTRACT

Introduction

The current position of tribal communities in India is one of oppression and marginalization. Many initiatives are afoot to redress this situation, however the civic authorities face numerous challenges and obstacles influenced by historical, economic and other socio-cultural elements. In this context, community engagement can be seen as a distinctive pedagogical tool, that fosters the development of partnerships between social work academic departments and communities, in order to improve the psycho-social well-being of individuals and families and to address socio-economically related problems in communities. Although initiatives in community engagement in India, are urgently required, have been slow to emerge, when compared to developed countries. Compounding this delay is the shortage of specific literature on community engagement. This study is pre-emptively important, as it highlights how social work departments use engagement successfully among tribals in India, as a crucial pillar to support learning and drive engagement. The study was set in Maharashtra, India and was part of a National Research Foundation study which explored community engagement in the international context. Given that this is a best practice project being implemented by the University of Mumbai, a collaboration was formed with the late Dr Chandrakant Puri, from the Social Work Department to pursue this study in a rural area outside Mumbai, India.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to explore how community engagement could facilitate a deeper understanding of Indian tribes and the related impact on community based learning. The structure of tribal communities, core values and processes that guide them and the interaction between the university and the community, were explored to this end. All the relevant gathered data was incorporated into developing a model to guide community engagement with tribal communities in India.

Methodology

A qualitative research approach was utilized in order to generate valuable data from the interaction with tribals and academics. The two samples in the study comprised of six social work academics, and twenty three students from the Department of Social Work. Semi structured interviews and focus group discussions were used to collect data with academics and students respectively. Data was obtained from the site at which students conducted their village, being a small rural village on the outskirts of Mumbai in the district of Maharashtra. Data was collected until saturation to extract the most relevant information. Thematic analysis was employed to analyse the collected data. This found associations and themes within the collated transcripts in detail. These themes and sub themes were derived from the data in entirety. This was accordingly representative of the gathered data.

Findings

It was found that the theoretical preparation of the institution, when juxtaposed with the specific context and challenges faced by a particular community, is of immense benefit to developing a relevant and useful curriculum to be used to engage with tribals. A summary of the challenges experienced by the community under study, was the lack of resources in the form of healthcare and sanitation, poor infrastructure, psycho-social issues, disparity of cultural sensitivity, migration for employment, and other socio-political concerns. The preparedness of the university for engagement with the community was enhanced by clearly defining and structuring the roles of social work academics. This was then used to determine the format of student preparation for interaction within the community by understanding the engagement context, displaying empathy and sensitizing students towards issues, and promoting equality, social justice and inclusion. From the data gathered, certain tools such as participatory rural appraisal and community mapping and profiling were used as pathways to further prepare students for engagement. Students were immersed in the culture and lifestyle of the tribal community, which allowed them to relate on a humanitarian level and this personalized the interaction allowing for richer experiences. Consequently, authentic university-community partnerships were established which reinforced the benefits of such collaboration.

Conclusion

Service learning was undertaken as a fieldwork component by the students of the Department of Social Work at The University of Mumbai. The study uncovered important information regarding tribal communities, the challenges they face, and the related preparedness of the institution for interaction. It captures the essence and value of community engagement in social work, given the extreme scarcity of such programmes in India. Ultimately, the importance and significance of establishing a model to guide tribal community engagement is emphasised in the interaction and impressions experienced by both the university and the tribals, who have interacted concurrently for their respective mutual benefit.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the late Dr Chandrakant Puri. Thank you for your assistance, motivation and inspiration. May this stand as one of the final contributions to your academic legacy. May your soul rest in peace.

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ACRONYMS

CE	:	Community Engagement
CUE	:	Community-University Engagement
UNESCO	:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UGC	:	University Grants Commission
CBR	:	Community based research
PRA	:	Participatory rural appraisal
NACC	:	National Assessment and Accreditation Council

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The history of India is intrinsically linked to the development and propagation of higher education globally. The world's first university (Taxila, present-day Pakistan) and the world's first residential university (Nalanda) were located here. Ancient higher education in India was predicated on the notion of community engagement and functioned in sync with society at large and reinforced societal needs. This augmented the link between current discourse of the relationship between higher education and community development (Singh, Tandon and Tremblay 2015:120).

Community involvement within the realm of higher education has occurred for a long time, under various guises. Guided by mutual benefits, there existed historically some form of exchange of knowledge, resources and services between higher education institutions and its neighbouring communities. However, the institutionalized practice of such exchange, termed "community engagement", has gained significance, in the Indian context recently, through the form of service-learning. Traditionally it was regarded as an essential component of higher education institutions, in developed countries like the US and the UK (NACC 2006:1).

One of the key tenets of higher education institutions is to play a greater role in addressing national as well as international issues, along with developing transformative knowledge that contributes to social awareness and change (Jadhav and Sulhalka 2016:23). According to Escrigas *et al.* (2014:33) "higher education should create a knowledge society where knowledge could be applied for sustainable and inclusive development." Furthermore Kumar (2012:2) stated that higher education is rarely seen as an intellectual resource, while the research that goes on at many of the higher education institutions, is viewed more as a completion of academic requirement to solve the questions of the social and natural world surrounding the universities. Hence, research that would be seen as an inquiry to solve the problems of society are regarded as nothing but community engagement.

The apex body regulating higher education in India, The University Grants Commission (UGC) has already taken some steps in this direction. The UGC has come up with a

proposal where it has decided to introduce at the university level, the promotion of arts, culture and community outreach programmes in the form of community engagement (Dhar 2013:2). Another initiative under the UGC 12 year plan guidelines, is the establishment of a centre for fostering social responsibility and community engagement at universities (Tandon 2014:2; Sabharwal and Malish 2016:26-27). The main aim of this scheme is to:

- promote university-community partnerships;
- improve the lives of people and their living conditions;
- build an alliance with community based organisations for promoting engagement; and
- promote the integration of service, service learning and experimental learning into co-curricular programmes with neighbourhood networks of other educational institutions.

In addition, there is also international support, evidenced by UNESCO and the British Council who are jointly developing a project on strengthening “community engagement in HEI’s” in India. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a context for this research study. The rationale for the study will be presented, as well as the background of the study. The research problem, the aim of the study, the research methodology and the theoretical framework that gave direction to this study will also be presented.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The study was undertaken in Mumbai, India in an area 43.6 kilometres out of central Mumbai. This is where Masters students from the Department of Social Work undertake their engagement activity. This forms the supporting context for community engagement at the University of Mumbai. India has the second largest population in the world consisting of 1.17 billion people. It is ranked 140th out of 180 in the Reporters without Borders, 2019 Media Freedom Index.

India has witnessed numerous challenges subsequent to gaining independence (Watson *et al.* 2011:63). In relation to higher education in India, there are three types of institutions viz. government, private aided and private unaided institutions. There has been a steady growth of enrolment at higher education institutions from 1986 to 1996, with numbers increasing from 3.75 million to 6.84 million respectively (Watson *et al.* 2011:64).

The University Grants Commission (UGC) oversees and funds higher education at a federal level in India. They provide funding mainly for central universities. The UGC has further executed policies related to the promotion of community engagement work (Watson *et al.* 2011:64; Sabharwal and Malish 2016:26). This is in relation to adult continuing education, extension and field outreach work. The areas of focus have been on continuing education programmes, communal harmony and peace education, environmental issues, women's empowerment, human rights and the rights of vulnerable groups, development issues, health education for the community and social and gender issues (Watson *et al.* 2011:65). This research study is located within this context and seeks to explore how community engagement facilitates a deeper understanding of tribal communities in India, and how community based teaching and learning occurs in this rural context, outside Mumbai. Moreover the higher education policy environment in India for community engagement is encouraging and the UGC commits to the provision of funds for this type of work (Watson *et al.* 2011:65). The researcher wishes to distill a comprehensive understanding of the nature of community engagement more specifically service learning in this context, as well to explore how community engagement occurs with and benefits tribal communities in a rural context.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Community engagement gained traction when, at the advent of the twenty first century, it began taking shape as a primary objective among higher education institutions, offering the platform to re-evaluate missions and outcomes, enhance teaching and learning methodology, initiate institution-community partnerships, and contemplate the fundamental concept of knowledge generation (Bjanarson and Coldstream, cited in Saltmarsh 2017:3). Community engagement adapts to different circumstances and situations in many diverse regions, across the globe, which is represented by variety in the implementation along with equivalence of strategic intention (Hoyt 2014:43).

Over the course of the past 30 years, deliberate initiatives have been implemented worldwide that seek to question the actual relatability between communities and institutions, while also suggesting improvements thereupon (Ward 2017:3). Historically developed, or first world nations such as the United States of America and the United Kingdom have tended to lead the way towards joint institution-community engagement (Bernado, Butcher and Howard 2012:187). This can be evidenced by Syracuse University in New York, USA,

where a structural overhaul of the faculty and administration over a 4-5 year timeline resulted in engagement being actively embedded within the policies on campus (Sachs and Clark 2017:12).

Additional examples include the UNESCO group in Community Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education (Tandon and Hall 2012), with partners across the globe ranging from Africa, Arab States, through Asia and the Pacific, Europe and North America, and to Latin America and the Caribbean (Hoyt 2014:42). The primary intention of the cooperative is to enhance linkages between tertiary institutions that combine resources and supplement existing knowledge and skills between and among partner institutions and communities. Other instances include the Australian Universities Community Engagement Alliance, and Campus Compact and the Carnegie Foundation in the United States, whose work have assisted with articulation of principles, provision of much needed resources, and highlighting of critical components related to connection and collaboration between higher education institutions and the communities they serve. Reports and associated material derived from these initiatives usually emphasise and promote social responsibility, faculty involvement, and improved student outcomes with regard to civic participation, democracy, and community service (Ward 2017:3).

Within the Irish context, the national higher education strategy stresses the need for “inward and outward flows of knowledge, staff, students and ideas between each institution and its external community” (Department of Education and Skills 2011:13) as a way to prioritise community engagement. The Higher Education System Performance Framework 2014–2016, also emphasised the importance of increased engagement with communities, and integrated knowledge exchange. Furthermore, in June 2015, Presidents across Irish higher education institutions committed to the ten-point ‘Campus Engage Charter on Civic and Community Engagement’. By signing up with the Charter, they pledged their commitment to the civic and community engagement role and responsibilities of their institutions. The launch of the Charter built upon similar initiatives in countries such as Australia, the UK and the US, which were set up to support and strengthen the civic role and responsibilities of higher education institutions (Quillinan *et al.* 2018:2).

In 2011, the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement in the UK launched the Manifesto for Public Engagement termed “The Engaged University” (NCCPE, 2011b). The gist of the manifesto, which contained 32 signatories as of July 2011, encouraged institutions to acknowledge the vital duty that they perform in societal development, along

with committing to share the relevant knowledge, resources and skills with the local communities in the form of functional and reciprocal dialogue and acumen. A noteworthy outcome of signing the manifesto resulted in universities and other institutions adjusting their stance to managing, supporting and delivering public interaction for the benefit of students, staff, and society, while also disseminating any information gained regarding effective practice (O' Connor *et al.* 2011:1).

Despite these and other global trends and advancements in developed countries, community engagement initiatives within higher education institutions throughout third world nations, such as India have been comparatively slow to emerge (NAAC 2006:1; Singh 2017:13), particularly in the rural context (Tandon 2014:2; Singh and Tandon 2015:116 - 118). Furthermore, from the available research and specific literature on community engagement practice among tribals is limited (Campbell and Christie 2009:4; O'Donahoo and Ross 2015:5304).

The latter is particularly important because this is the area of society that would most benefit from community engagement. India presents a unique perspective regarding social development, as despite high economic growth rates, the massive population gives rise to copious socio-political and developmental issues including high unemployment levels, severely insufficient infrastructure in rural and tribal areas, widescale illiteracy and lack of quality education, among various other challenges (Agrawal and Pradhan 2016:84).

According to Vasilesu *et al.* (2010:4177) and Fullerton (2015:57), it is essential for universities to become effective engines which prepare students to apply their expertise in facilitating the development of grassroots communities, countries and regions. In support of this view, Fullerton (2015:57) endorses a system that benefits university researchers, students and the community. He further emphasised benefits from community engagement through improving universities' core intellectual and academic work, in part, through involving students and faculty with real-world experience which can positively impact both research and teaching. In addition, Fullerton (2015:57) contended that by jointly involving both communities and students when tackling the problems these communities encounter, rural planning and development scholars can bring about valuable experiences for all role players, with particular reference to tribal communities. Anderson (2014 cited in Francis Kilonzo and Nyamukondiwa 2016:1) expanded this notion by pointing out that more relevant insight and implications from research are obtained when they are developed in collaboration with those who live the life.

1.3.1 The Department of Social Work: Mumbai University

The Department of Social Work at the University of Mumbai has contributed extensively towards building community engagement, in terms of its field work practicum placements. It has endeavoured working towards holistic and sustainable development and propagates the emphasis of maximum human potential, skills enhancement, equal opportunities, justice, respect for diversity and an anti-discriminatory environment. Many initiatives, such as establishing health camps, were introduced by the Department in conjunction with the tribal communities. These types of initiatives that are strongly entrenched in community partnerships make students' learning experiences very purposeful and relevant (Wells 2006:401).

The context for this particular study was the Social Work Department and students who were involved in fieldwork placements at the University of Mumbai. "Social work education provides great importance to field work, which is considered as the soul of the social work profession" (Jadhav and Suhalka 2016:24). The University of Mumbai as such places paramount importance on fieldwork education. Fieldwork-based learning phases are spread across the two years of the Master's programme in Social Work, with a weightage of around 28% in the overall curriculum. In the first year of the M.A. programme in Social Work, fieldwork is generic and aims at developing perspectives, understanding practice roles and learning intervention skills. Hence, student learning is directed towards understanding the contexts of engagement and core practice issues.

The first year of field work also strives to provide opportunities for interactions with a broad range of people, issues and sectors. It simultaneously fosters experiential learning of social work values, principles and ethics. Students are exposed to developing the ability to reflect critically on self, organisation, social structure and systems, and assimilate learning through the guided process of fieldwork supervision. It runs concurrently with classroom inputs and requires the student to complete fifteen hours of fieldwork over two specified days a week, with the field based organization and settings that he/she has been placed at. This study is based in India with a particular focus on the social work context, where students of the Mumbai University work at the interface of tribal communities.

Community engagement is commonly considered as service learning amongst social workers in India. Despite this, social work educators have not effectively utilised service learning as a central pedagogy (Lowe and Clark 2009:51; Deck, Conner and Cambron 2017:470), subsequently leading to other authors advocating for its increased use in social

work courses (Lowe and Clark 2009:51). A particularly notable benefit of service-learning is that it has the ability to link theory and practice, such that student engagement and interest will intensify. Therefore, “there is reason to believe that the use of service-learning in social work education can greatly contribute to the positive academic outcomes and to the professional development of social work students” (King 2003:45; Bednarz *et al.* 2008:91-92; Grunwell and Ha 2014:36). Moreover, community engagement also conveys intellectual benefits to the students in the form of critical thinking and problem solving skills related to their field of study, while simultaneously boosting academic development. Other commonly observed outcomes consist of enhancement of interpersonal communication skills along with academic learning and improved student impetus.

1.4. AIM OF THE STUDY

To explore how community engagement facilitates a deeper understanding of an Indian tribe and how community based learning occurs in this context.

1.5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study were as follows:

- 1.5.1 To understand how tribal communities are conceptualised in rural India.
- 1.5.2 To inquire about the spiritual beliefs and practices of tribal communities in India.
- 1.5.3 To explore the university process of engaging with tribal communities.
- 1.5.4 To explore how community engagement facilitates community based teaching and learning, with Indian tribes.
- 1.5.5 To develop a model to guide community engagement with tribal communities in India.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions for this study were as follows:

- 1.6.1 How are tribal communities conceptualised in rural India?
- 1.6.2 What are the spiritual beliefs and practices of tribal communities in India?

- 1.6.3 What is the university's process of engaging with tribal communities?
- 1.6.4 How does community based teaching and learning occur with tribal communities?
- 1.6.5 What are the core values and processes that guides community engagement with tribal communities?

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

There is currently ample evidence that university community engagement has evolved into a rather significant and sustained movement globally. This is due in part to the drastic escalation, in the number of “engaged” universities, with relevant programmes becoming embedded and institutionalized throughout various academic disciplines. Increasingly, engaged universities are working together through a growing network of international, regional and local networks arranged to reinforce the civic mission of higher education, while the field is experiencing improved support within communities and from financiers (Hoyt and Hollister 2014:1692). In addition, several networks and alliances have emerged globally, which are exclusively and largely focused on community-university partnerships (Global University Network for Innovation, 2018). One such notable example would be The Talloires Network, which began in 2005 to promote civic engagement at universities (O'Connor *et al.* 2011:6; Hoyt and Hollister 2014:1692). It has since grown from 29 universities to 312 universities in 72 countries (Hoyt and Hollister 2014:1692). The Engaged University, which is their current publication, contains case studies of community-university partnerships from around the world. A series of dialogues and conferences on themes of civic engagement of universities have also been declared by various institutions, as of May 2018 (GUNI 2018).

Ferman and Hill (2004:243), along with Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2000:775) stated that there are four major beneficiaries of community engagement and associated activities, namely the institutions, the faculty, the students, and the actual community itself. Students gain practical understanding of the relevance of theoretical application, institutions enhance community relationships, whilst simultaneously toning down public apprehension towards community engagement (Erickson 2010:8). Faculties also translate theory into application, while the communities gain valuable support, resources and a platform for social upliftment (Singh 2017:5).

India can be profiled as one of the most rapidly progressing countries of recent times and has been steadily transitioning from a historically third world country towards far greater economic and social development. According to Verma and Singh (2015:11-12), there have been community engagement initiatives undertaken by universities in India, which have not been thoroughly mapped and documented. A few of these initiatives include:

- The 'Samarth Bharat Abhiyan Programme' which was created by University of Pune in 2005. It focused on adopting villages and resolving multiple social issues.
- B.P.S Mahila Vishwavidyalaya set up a Centre for Society-University Interface Research (CSUIR), which, among other activities, strives to mould students into learners, helpers, analysers and facilitators regarding community interaction.
- Rural Research Centre (RRC) of the University of Lucknow which mainly concentrates on vocational training and research on pressing matters.

Along with this progress in other aspects, university community engagement has fairly recently taken on certain added significance and relevance (Jadhav and Sulhalka 2016:1), with the majority of institutions still administering outdated 'extension' activities, where engagement is perceived from a charity and extra-curricular perspective (Singh 2017:13). In light of this, this study would be beneficial to contributing to the scholarly body of knowledge (Albertyn and Daniels 2009: 420-421; Botha *et al.* 2010:24).

A key outcome of this study will be the development of a model that will guide community engagement within tribal communities in India. By utilisation of such a model, graduates and professionals would enhance their skills and become more in touch with the cultural and social requirements that the community would have, which encompasses rural, indigenous, and remote communities (Strasser 2010:5). Strasser (2010:3) further stipulated that community engagement has the ability to bridge higher education and the respective community each institution serves. A reciprocal partnership is developed accordingly, through which the community actively participates, which leads to increased community goodwill towards students.

In a study by Cronley and colleagues (2014:148) social work educators became more alert of the pitfalls and challenges facing students in the field by implementing social work in the curriculum, while the students themselves enriched their knowledge and laid a platform for increased moral and ethical awareness (Jones *et al.* 2018:80). Students further honed their abilities and aptitude to assist tribal and indigenous communities once they had graduated (Strasser 2010:5). The tribal communities gained free access to resources and assistance that would have been otherwise denied to them, and also reaped the collective social rewards of such programmes (Charles, Alexander and Oliver 2014:3-4).

Moreover, this study will be of value to social work, by examining the relationship and interaction between social work principles and theory to tribal communities, as there is a dire lack of such application and related literature. Consequently this study can be used as a point of reference.

1.8 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

1.8.1 Community development

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions of community development have been utilised. According to Hackett (2004:12), community development is a process that permits community residents to come together to plan, generate solutions and take action developing the evolution of social, economic, environmental and cultural aspects of community. Mbah (2016:1229-1230) corroborated this when he stated that community development illustrates a process of working collectively and interconnectively, for the sake of “change”. Mutual action that results in “change” expressed in the form of community development is not restricted to people working in a state of unison, but rather also comprises community-based organisations and government agencies that engage in the same principle of interconnectedness. Kuponiyi (2008:10) further emphasised the importance of community development participation as a means of strengthening local communities.

1.8.2 Community engagement

Escrigas (cited in Jadhav and Suhalka 2016:23) defined community engagement as a multidimensional umbrella term, that describes collaboration between the university and a community for mutual beneficial exchange of resources and knowledge. Similarly The Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET 2003:4), referred to community engagement as a systematic relationship between Higher Education (HE) and its environment that is characterised by mutually beneficial interaction, in the sense that it enriches learning, teaching and research and simultaneously addresses societal problems, issues and challenges. This definition is adopted for this study.

1.8.3 Tribal community

The study adopted the following definition of tribal communities. Tribal communities are termed as primitive "based on pre-agricultural level of technology, low level of literacy, stagnant or diminishing population size, relative seclusion from the main stream of population, economic and educational backwardness, extreme poverty, dwelling in remote inaccessible hilly terrains, maintenance of constant touch with the natural environment, and unaffected by the developmental process undergoing in India" (Bhasin and Walter 2001:26).

1.8.4 Service learning

For the purpose of this study, the following definition of service learning was adopted to guide an understanding of how the University of Mumbai integrates fieldwork into their course work. Service learning has been defined as a "course-based, credit -bearing educational experience in which students (a) participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and (b) reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility" (Bringle and Hatcher 1996:166).

For over a quarter of a century, education researchers and practitioners have struggled to determine how to best characterize service-learning. Ryan and Callaham (cited in Hildenbrand and Schultz 2015:264) defined service learning as a reciprocal relationship that merges both field experience and sustainable community service, to offer learning

opportunities that link academics to the service, so both college students and the community partners benefit.

Sigmon (cited in Furco 2011:71) defined service-learning as an experiential education approach that is premised on "reciprocal learning." It was suggested that because learning flows from service activities, both those who provide service and those who receive it "learn" from the experience.

1.8.5 Social justice

According to the National Association of Social workers (cited in Morgaine 2014:4) social justice is defined as "the view that everyone deserves equal economic, political and social rights and opportunities. Social workers aim to open the doors of access and opportunity for everyone, particularly those in greatest need. A brief glance at the many roles of social workers shows how this value system underscores everything they do". For the purpose of this study this definition of social justice was used.

1.8.6 Spirituality

Links between spirituality and social work have been established and reinforced greatly over the recent past, particularly the last two decades, encompassing aspects such as literature, research and implementation (Seinfeld 2012:241). The concept of social work developed partly as a result of religious philanthropic intentions. As it obtained more structure and attempted to garner greater academic respectability, social work became more distanced from its initial religious-philanthropic roots (Seinfeld 2012:241).

Many scholars provide a wider definition of spirituality as the search for meaning and purpose (Healy 2005:183; Payne 2005:181; Gray 2008:176; Mathews 2009:5; Walsh 2010:28). Similarly, social work scholars Canda and Furman (2010:59) define spirituality as referring "to a universal and fundamental human quality involving the search for a sense of meaning, purpose, morality, wellbeing, and profundity in relationships with ourselves, others and ultimate reality, however understood". In addition, Wagler-Martin (2007: 136) described spirituality as creating meaning, a form of grounding, and developing a perspective of the environment embedded in a belief system.

From these definitions, it is apparent that spirituality has a vast impact on the development and execution of social work activities, particularly in India and other similar nations,

wherein spirituality and religion forms an integral aspect of cultural life. Belcher and Mellinger (2016:379) reinforced that spirituality often assists people to make sense of regular issues and/or life and fortifies the interconnectedness of people and the broader community. It is a tool that is already ingrained in daily life and is immensely valuable for social work initiatives.

1.9. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

According to Grant and Osanloo (2014:12) a theoretical framework is one of the most important aspects in the research process, as it is the foundation from which all knowledge is constructed both metaphorically and literally for a research study.

One of the most prominent advocates of university-community engagement was the American scholar Ernest Boyer (Ward 2017:3). This study adopted Boyer's framework for university-community engagement, where Boyer (1996:11-16) suggested that scholars work in four interconnected areas, generating knowledge that addresses communal needs. He proposed that the institution should be committed to searching for answers to critical social, civic and moral issues by utilising the four dimensions (Boyer 1996:11-16). In essence, Boyer's model can be used as a voice to explain scholarly work across teaching, research, and service, to comprehensively address the community issues that can be resolved with the aid of the institutions (Ward 2017:3).

The model presents the four dimensions of community engagement, i.e. scholarship of discovery, scholarship of integration, scholarship of teaching and scholarship of application as a form of knowledge exchange between universities and communities (Holland 2005:13; Hyman *et al.* 2002:47). This theoretical framework was adopted to understand how the University of Mumbai, implements community engagement through service learning, in the Department of Social Work. The university prioritises working with the community as part of its course work. This is an attempt to assist communities in meeting and solving the current challenges they are facing, as well as to enhance and build on students' civic and social responsibility. The four dimensions are discussed further below:

1.9.1 The scholarship of discovery

The scholarship of discovery can be surmised as the origin of innovative information and viewpoints that can be applied to research and academic output (Stewart 2015:324). Greenhow and Gleason (2014:4) further defined this scholarship as "original research that

expands or challenges current knowledge in a discipline.” Dependent on the actual required outcomes, it could consist of systematic qualitative inquiry, hypothetical postulation or statistical analysis. In the context of community engagement, the scholarship of discovery advances the intention of joint research between universities and communities. As such, it emphasises research as one of the core objectives of community engagement (Tobin *et al.* 2010:3). Boyer theorised that any healthy engagement activity should be founded on the generation of new information that would be valuable to either the community or the academic community (Mtawa, Fongwa and Wangenge-Ouma 2016: 127). To this end, Mumbai University has been involved in collaborative research projects with tribal communities, that seek to uncover and document the many challenges experienced by the community. Part of the intention is to resolve such challenges jointly through their sharing of expertise.

1.9.2 The scholarship of integration

The subsequent dimension of integration is described by Boyer (2016:64) as “giving meaning to isolated facts”, by identifying meaningful patterns and trends across studies and disciplines. Essentially the objective of integration is to formulate research outputs, that critically evaluate, interpret and provide fresh insight to bear on original research (Herman and Nicholas 2019:11). This conception of the scholarship of integration, is consistent with connectivist values of developing and articulating a network of connections across disciplines (Greenhow and Gleason 2014:6).

Integration would be invaluable in standardising expertise across different disciplines, while also assisting in collating various types of knowledge in communities. In addition, the application of integration could result in a greater theoretical grasp of local or indigenous knowledge whilst identifying multidimensional challenges in a more comprehensible manner for the local community (Mtawa, Fongwa and Wangenge-Ouma 2016:127). Mumbai University regularly undertakes various schemes and programmes with the village community. One example is hosting medical health check-ups. Several securitization workshops are conducted by the late Dr Chandrakant Puri, who co-supervised the research study, to integrate scholarship across the disciplines.

1.9.3 The scholarship of application

The third dimension of the framework, endeavours to amalgamate theoretical perspective with practical application, which in turn aids the larger community (Greenhow and Gleason 2014:8; Mtawa, Fongwa and Wangenge-Ouma 2016:128; Brew 2012:105). The scholarship of application effort should be involved specifically with a particular knowledge stream and encompass all aspects of this professional activity (Boyer 1990:22; Twait 2014:23). According to Boyer (2016:68), the scholarship of application that “both relates and contributes to human knowledge is sorely needed in a world in which massive, almost unsurmountable challenges require the type of abilities and perspectives unique to the academy.” This aspect of application is imperative to the model, as it facilitates the generation of new knowledge that aids in creating value and relevance in the daily lives of community members (Mtawa, Fongwa and Wangenge-Ouma 2016:132). Holland (2005:12) further stressed that higher education institutions should become more hands-on in a highly intricate learning environment where discovery, learning, and engagement are incorporated in activities that involve multiple sources of knowledge created in diverse settings by a variety of contributors.

Mumbai University utilises this approach to teaching as the university ensures that field work and visits are integrated into every course programme.

1.9.4 The scholarship of teaching

Boyer’s most enduring aspect of this model is defining teaching as scholarship. The scholarship of teaching has been validated to mean that research becomes applicable at the point of communication and understanding by other parties (Day *et al.* 2019:170). In fact, the vision of Boyer appeals greatly to modern practitioners as this viewpoint conforms to current pedagogical procedure, which places students at the heart of the teaching/learning process (Brew 2012:111-112; Robson 2017:121-122). According to Boyer (2016:69), “without the teaching function, the continuity of knowledge will be broken and the store of human knowledge dangerously diminished.” Reading widely and intellectual engagement are the primary critical elements for those who teach (Mtawa, Fongwa and Wangenge-Ouma 2016:127).

In the context of community engagement, this scholarship facilitates the development of environments whereby students, staff and community members jointly engage in teaching

and learning processes. As such, Boyer identifies this as a “communal act” for it enables knowledge to be communicated to different constituents, while keeping the flame of scholarship burning bright (Mtawa, Fongwa and Wangenge-Ouma 2016:128).

Consequently, teaching in community engagement evolves from a theoretical to a practical level, whilst concurrently motivating participants involved in community engagement to be active, promoting analytical thinking and sustained learning (Boyer 1990:24). Scholars who engage in the scholarship of teaching, may benefit from an enhanced ability to implement active, co-created learning experiences (Greenhow and Gleason 2014:7).

With regards to the current study, academics and students from Mumbai University involve themselves in engagement with the communities. Students acquired new skills and knowledge during their fieldwork practice and these experiences are shared with academics and other students through reflections in the classroom. Students at the university learn theory as part of the course.

This leads to the implementation of what they have learnt in the classroom during their field work practice. Students are also afforded the opportunity in class to analyse what they had experienced during field work. These elements essentially represent Boyer’s scholarship of application. Boyer’s model of university–community engagement corresponds with this study and broadly resonates with the objectives of the study. The framework was used to classify and showcase the university’s ideology towards community engagement with the tribal community.

1.10 OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this section the research design, which is discussed in greater depth in chapter 3, is introduced. This study used a qualitative design since the aim was to gain a deeper understanding of community engagement with tribal communities in a social work context. Data was collected from two purposive samples viz. students and academics using focus group discussions and interviews. These samples are from the University of Mumbai specifically. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data obtained during interviews and focus group discussions.

1.11 STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

Chapter 1 – Introduction.

Chapter 2 – Literature review.

Chapter 3 – Research Methodology.

Chapter 4 – Presentation and discussion of the findings.

Chapter 5 – Recommendations and conclusions of the study.

1.12 CONCLUSION

Chapter one provided a concise summary of the research topic. The problem statement, research objectives and questions, rationale for the study, and the significance of the study were discussed. This was followed by a description of the theoretical framework which was used as the basis of the study, along with its importance. An abridged overview of the methodology utilised was included. The subsequent chapter will comprise of a review of the literature, relating to the study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

A literature review is defined as a structured presentation of existing, previously researched areas relevant to the topic (Mouton 2001:86; Polit and Beck 2012:58). In addition, Boswell and Cannon (2014:48) stated that it is an analytical summary of specific research findings related to the study topic. In essence, a literature review is a method of reviewing journals and articles with comprehensive awareness and interpretation of topics under study, that have already been researched and discussed. Contradictions and gaps in existing knowledge are further analysed. Furthermore, the review of previous literature forms the basis of sound evidence for researchers, generates increased availability of appropriate information, and aids with identifying the known and unknown characteristics regarding phenomena under review.

The research questions forms one of the crucial elements to guide the literature review. Once researchers develop research questions, their focus then is compiling evidence based on research in journals. Relevant secondary data, along with abstract concepts of explicit and tacit knowledge, is then investigated to set up a new approach for research (Jesson *et al.* 2012:9-10; Dahlberg and McCaig 2010:76-77). This enables researchers to identify a theoretical background and provides a platform through which the results of a study are interpreted, compared and critiqued (Boswell and Cannon 2014:48). This literature review then provides a background to the research study and provides an argument for why the study is needed. It also provides the reader with the framework that informs the research.

The following literature review focuses on the conceptualisation of community engagement, followed by community engagement in a global and Indian context. It then moves on to social work in India, with a specific focus on the tribal community and their characteristics. It concludes with a discussion on the various forms of engagement and the advantages of community engagement.

2.2 CONCEPTUALISATION OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Internationally, community engagement has been referred to as a process of inclusive participation that encourages mutual respect of values, strategies, and actions for authentic partnership of people affiliated through geographical location, shared interests, and situations to address the concerns which impact the well-being of the community (Ahmed and Palermo 2010: 1383; Jones and Wells 2007:407). This is especially valid in the context of the nature and prevalence of globalisation throughout the world today.

This definition is further substantiated by Jacob *et al.* (2015:1), who defined community engagement as a sustainable partnership between community members or organisations, and higher education institutions. Pasque *et al.* (cited in Weaver *et al.* 2017:176) added that this shared practice must be of benefit to the community partner, as well as to the institution. Moreover, community engagement is explained as the relationship between higher education institutions and their respective communities which have as their basis, qualities such as reciprocity, mutual respect, shared authority, and the co-creation of goals and outcomes (Tieken 2017:7; Hall 2010:25).

In a paper entitled Universities and Community Engagement (cited in Nasir *et al.* 2017:209), community engagement is described as a specific method for academic research and teaching that involves various external communities such as business, industry, schools, governments, non-governmental organisations, indigenous and ethnic communities, and the general public in collaborative activities that address community needs and opportunities, while also enriching the teaching, learning and research objectives of the university. It was the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (2012 cited in Fitzgerald *et al.* 2016:229) that provided the most comprehensive definition of community engagement. They defined it as “the collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global), for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources, in a context of partnership and reciprocity”. Furthermore, Weerts and Sandmann (2010:632) surmised that this definition implies that engagement deviates significantly from established conceptualisations of public service and outreach. The notions of service and outreach, in particular, are commonly accepted as one-way approaches to delivering knowledge and service to the public. Engagement, on the other hand, emphasises a two-way approach in which institutions and community partners work together, to develop and implement knowledge to address societal needs.

Within the context of higher education, community engagement can consist of several forms. These may include inter alia distance education, community-based research, participatory action research, professional community service and service learning (Bringle and Hatcher 2002:503; Krause 2007:279; Bednarz *et al.* 2008:89; Lazarus *et al.* 2008:61). The following section explores community engagement in a global context.

2.3 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

Higher education institutions have a distinguished position in the social hierarchy as a contributor of not just academic output, but rather also upliftment and progression of community living standards and quality of life. This is mainly accomplished by the three major facets of teaching, research and community service. The latter has increasingly become more pronounced on the international higher education diaspora and is commonly labelled as “engagement”.

The concept of community engagement, although structurally remaining the same, differs from country to country due to cultural, geopolitical, societal and environmental factors. A review of literature shows that, from the 1990s, American universities were defined by a transition from the entrenched service and outreach model, towards a two-way engagement model which encouraged collaboration between the university and communities in creating and disseminating knowledge (Weerts and Sandmann 2010:632). Although this shift originated in America, the impact has been observed across many universities around the world. Holland and Ramaley (2008:33) stated that “community engagement is transforming higher education in many institutions in nations around the world (UK, Spain, Germany, India, Japan, Vietnam, Thailand, the Philippines, Australia, USA, Canada, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, and Africa, among others)”. A few noteworthy exponents of community engagement (CE) include Ernest Boyer, through his theory of ‘engaged scholarship’, and the Kellogg Commission of 1999 which moved away from the traditional terms of research, teaching and service to the use of the words discovery, learning and engagement (Holland and Ramaley 2008:39; Hall 2009:16).

In 2000, the Presidents of multiple American colleges and universities signed the President’s Declaration on the Civic Responsibilities of Higher Education (Campus Compact 2012:1). A notable aspect of this document stated: “that this country cannot afford to educate a generation that acquires knowledge without ever utilising that knowledge to benefit society, or to impact positively on democratic decision- making. We

must impart the skills and values of democracy, creating sustained opportunities for our students to implement and reap the genuine, hard work of citizenship” (Campus compact 2012:2).

To date, close to 500 institutions have signed the declaration, among which are community colleges, liberal arts colleges, and major research universities. The Talloires Declaration on the Civic Roles and Social Responsibilities of Higher Education was a comparable document in 2005, that signalled an international awareness of the need to invest in civic education initiatives (Talloires Network 2005). Ultimately signed by over 300 institutional leaders, Talloires was more direct in the call for change. In many ways, Talloires paralleled the 2000 Declaration, stating that “universities have the responsibility to foster...a sense of social responsibility and a commitment to the social good, which, we believe, is central to the success of a democratic and just society” (Talloires Network 2005:1). However, there was also a much more thorough list of required actions to achieve the changes sought by attendees. These actions included integrating social responsibility in university policies and practices, and increasing the rigor of community engagement activities to be on par with other forms of scholarship. This is particularly relevant as, in a society besieged with complex problems and crumbling political ideology, the need for undergraduate students to graduate with critical thinking and collaboration skills necessary for meaningful engagement in community, is more vital than ever before (Hurtado and DeAngelo 2012:14).

Globally, community-university partnerships present a mixed picture. In first world countries such as the USA and Australia these partnerships are fairly well developed, with institution-wide structures created to provide continuing support for activities intended for enhanced cultural and social change. Other countries like the UK and South Africa still have a relative historical scarcity of such partnerships (Northmore and Hart 2011:2-3). A comparative dearth of funding and resources has come about partly due to this mixed picture (Implementation Evaluation Report 2016:17). However, much progress has been made in the UK and South Africa in the past ten years, primarily in South Africa through the implementation of the National Research Fund (NRF) initiative for community engagement known as the Community Engagement Funding Instrument (CEFI) since 2014. This initiative supports research and associated activities in the higher education spectrum. The following sub-section provides a summary of different countries around the world that experience and utilise community engagement according to their own circumstances.

The United Kingdom employs various approaches to community engagement, as reported by The Russell Group of Universities (as cited in Bernardo *et al.* 2012:188). These approaches vary from answering a specific request from the community without the university benefitting in any way, to collaborating with the community about a topic of specific interest, which could be mutually beneficial to both the community and the university (Bernardo *et al.* 2012:188). However, Crabtree (2008:18) opposed the approach utilised in the UK and stressed that community engagement should not prioritise one particular social issue, one example could be the alleviation of poverty. The intention of community engagement is to intensify global awareness and develop understanding of both communities at risk and universities, that would aid in creating joint goals that could include achieving social justice as well as develop the requisite skills, among others (Crabtree 2008:18).

In the Philippines higher education institutions make use of the term “community development and service” instead of community engagement (Bernardo *et al.* 2012: 188). Community development and service is supported by a variety of programmes that have been created and are presented by the staff and university students in order to support marginalised and impoverished communities. Bernardo *et al.* (2012:189) highlighted the models used for community engagement by the higher education institutions in the Philippines as compared to Australia. The former uses the needs-based model, which is religion-centered, whose aims are to respond to the various critical needs of the community, whereas the latter is more mission-based and seeks to contribute to the social, cultural and economic development of its communities.

The federal government of Brazil has developed a community engagement initiative called the programme in Support of Plans for Expansion and Restructuring of Federal Universities (REUNI) in 2007. This was designed to provide guidelines to universities in delivering an interdisciplinary and team-oriented approach to coursework. Of this, health care curriculum focuses on community engagement, and the fulfilment of social needs forms one of the major elements (Jacob *et al.* 2015:13).

Community engagement in Russia is strongly linked to economic and political influences. Russian technical and vocational colleges have been traditionally patterned after the industry-focused model that existed during the Soviet era, and as a result have been in many ways, able to maintain community engagement linkages necessary to suit local and national industry requirements (Jacob *et al.* 2015:14).

In South Africa, higher education institutions were collectively challenged by relevant measures to enhance the commitment between South African higher education and the public by elevating the status of teaching and raising community engagement to a level well above the current one of public service (Bender 2007:127; Alperstein 2007:59; Bender 2008a:1154). In South Africa, community engagement became prominent in higher education from the late 1990s. Since then, the development of community engagement has been interlinked with the policy imperatives and subsequent transformation of higher education (Lazarus *et al.* 2008:58).

The publication of the Education White Paper by the Department of Education (1997) formed the basis for community service to become an integral aspect of higher education in South Africa (Bender 2008:83). This transformation in higher education also led to changes in widely acknowledged perceptions of "community service" (DoE 1997:19) and "academically based community service" (Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) 2001), to more recently used terminology of "community engagement" which includes service learning (HEQC 2004a; HEQC 2004b; HEQC/Joint Education Trust (JET) Education Services of South Africa 2006a). An example of community engagement is the Teboho Trust, a community engagement initiative by the University of Johannesburg, which uplifts underprivileged learners by measures including tutoring, holiday camps, and workshops, that collectively aid in enhancing learners' self-esteem along with possible academic achievement (Teboho Trust 2017:1). From a general global perspective on community engagement, the review of literature will now move to community engagement in India. This is the context for the current study.

2.4 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN INDIA

The current study was implemented in India, hence the reason for an increased emphasis on community engagement in India within this review. Higher education institutions globally, including universities in India, have recently started shifting away from the commonly held public notion of these institutions being "ivory towers" as they strive for greater engagement on multiple levels with their immediate communities and society at large (Taylor *et al.* 2018:29; Hudson 2013:110). To help facilitate a shift from this perception, universities endeavoured to minimise the gap between higher education and society, along with partnering actively with local communities that would result in institutions becoming more invested and developing mutual parity. In addition, Jacob *et al.*

(2015:3) emphasised that for higher education institutions to have an impact that is sustainable in society, they are required to be closely established within the local communities. It was the President of India in 2015, Mr Pranab Mukherjee, who validated this statement when he proclaimed that academic institutions should involve themselves more in local villages by utilising resources to assist in overcoming challenges and difficulties. He made this statement while speaking at an event held at Punjab University at the beginning of 2015. Another significant observation is the fact that higher education institutions situated in or around rural areas are uniquely positioned in a way which can immensely benefit their local communities for comprehensive development (Rice and Walsh 2014:126).

Thus, it is evident from the above that the idea of community engagement at universities is gradually becoming more entrenched in India and policy makers have identified its relevance and incorporated it into regular academic syllabi. Consequently, The University Grants Commission (UGC) generated an initiative, to bolster community engagement in universities. This initiative caters for the creation of Centres for Social Responsibility and Community Engagement (CFSRCE) at higher education institutions (Jadhav and Suhalka 2016:22; Singh 2017:12). The primary goals of the scheme comprise of fostering community-university partnerships, developing knowledge that could improve the lives of the people, promote participatory research and, in partnership with community based organizations, plan and execute projects (PRIA Policy Brief 2014:1).

In addition, other bodies in the higher education sector have simultaneously developed efforts in this regard (Tandon 2015:1). Some of these initiatives include the following factors:

- 1) The Association of Indian Universities has conveyed its desire to boost such engagement in higher education, by enlisting the assistance of PRIA to accomplish this objective.
- 2) The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) has also incorporated community engagement as a vital criterion in judging the performance of universities.
- 3) The National Universities Ranking System proposed by the Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD) also attributes the social contribution of universities to be a key benchmark in ranking universities.

2.5 SOCIAL WORK IN INDIA

To more accurately grasp the implications of social development from the Indian viewpoint, the international perspective first needs to be analysed and contrasted. Throughout the course of the 20th century social work norms and standards have evolved to adapt to the relevant corresponding changes in society and culture at large (Noble 2004:3). An example of such an evolution is evidenced by Midgeley (1997:162) as social work was initially enforced, as a means to combat some of the negative effects of poverty, unemployment and social ills resulting in part from the Industrial Revolution in the early parts of the century. Many national education systems in various countries currently prescribe social work in their curriculums, although the actual content, the pedagogy, and the application may vary between countries. A shared element is that there is no universal pattern of education for the social workers (Kendall 1987:988; Baikady and Pulla 2014:311). The set of Global Standards for the Education and Training of the Social Work Profession (2004) was drawn up by the International Association for School of Social Work in corroboration with the International Federation for Social Workers, the two prominent institutions in the field of social work that supply guidelines for social work education and its practices covering the world (Sewpaul and Jones 2005:13; Faruque and Ahmmed 2013:64; Baikady and Pulla 2014:311). Several social work educators from various countries have conceded that the global social work definition and global social work standards could be extremely valuable, yet continue to experience numerous challenges with its implementation due partially to local requirements and diversity (Nikku 2014:105).

The background and progression of social work in India is extensive, originating from historically altruistic responses of individuals or groups of people in attempts to resolve the problems of society, and adapting to the more modern professionalization of social work, embellished by formal education in theory and practice (Adaikalam 2014:216; Palattiyil and Sidhva 2012:75). More recently, standards of social work in India encompass a broad range of social issues that should be measured against the backdrop of social work in the global context, resulting in multiple similarities, prominently the upliftment and general enhancement of well-being of oppressed or marginalised communities, and other more poignant situations such as the intended economic development and associated problems, for instance the increased prevalence of HIV/AIDS (Alphonse, George and Moffatt 2008:154). Even considering it has a history spanning 75 years, of social work education, India has still not definitively developed national guidelines on social work education,

standardisation in curricula, or formulated a licensure procedure. Neither has a National Association of social workers been established to implement and evaluate said professional standards (Nikku 2014:100; Botcha 2012:206-208; Baikady and Pulla 2014:315-316).

Many large cities globally, one of which can be illustrated by Mumbai in India, have experienced social exclusion and marginalisation of vulnerable groups within their respective communities. This has resulted in areas of advanced marginality partially as a consequence of neoliberal globalisation (United Nations Human Settlements Programme 2013:109; Wacquant 2008:131). Hence, social work in Mumbai is conducted within the context of extreme poverty and the majority of the work is engaged in the informal welfare sector.

In Mumbai, a significant aspect of community work entails organising community members for collective empowerment to strengthen the power of marginalised groups and to achieve social change (Sjöberg *et al.* 2015:364). However, the postmodern understanding of our global world is therefore posing some acute challenges for social work, in terms of how to forge new understandings of responsibilities and to design relevant interventions both at global and local levels that would be beneficial to marginalised communities (Fook 2002 cited in Sjöberg *et al.* 2015:364).

Within these parameters, an important aspect for critical social work discourse can be associated, with the analysis of collective empowerment within community work. Social workers from all around the world engage in working towards social change through empowerment interventions for the liberation of people, with the prime objective of enhancing well-being (International Association of Schools of Social Work 2014:1). In addition, one fundamental foci of social workers is endeavouring to achieve common human needs, predominantly the needs of vulnerable and oppressed people, to obtain social justice with the intention that all members of a society should have equivalent basic rights, protection, opportunities, obligations and social benefits (Hare 2004 in Sjöberg *et al.* 2015:365; IFSW 2014:1; Mac Dermott and Campbell 2016:376; Jones 2009:8).

One particular approach of social work education is experiential learning that includes the traditional emphasis on elements such as field experience and practicum placements. The experiential learning aspect of education shifts students from in-class learning, commonly through established teaching methods, to direct application of this accumulated knowledge

through experiences (Campbell 2014:219; Jones 2009:17). Social work education has been methodically progressing toward a more competency-based approach, resulting in institutions increasing their use of pedagogical tools designed to create opportunities for students, which together with traditional field placements helps to improve their practice skills. Service learning is categorised as such a tool, which along with other forms of experiential education serves to provide these opportunities, and concurrently develops an additional means for departments to evaluate and monitor student practice behaviours (Phillips 2011:1).

The following sub-sections focuses on tribal communities that comprise the majority of the rural population of India. This is one of the core areas of focus of the current study and forms the context for social work student placements in Maharashtra, India.

2.5.1 Tribals in India

Second to the African continent, India has the largest concentration of tribal populations with Maharashtra being one of the four states that has the largest number of tribes. All the tribal communities in Maharashtra are economically impoverished. The primary source of their livelihood is agriculture. Forty percent of the tribal cultivate land, whereas forty five percent of them work as agricultural labourers (Puri 2009:19-20). Besides agriculture, another major source of their livelihood is forest products (Puri 2009:20; Chaudhuri and Roy 2017:238). The number of estimated tribes in India currently is said to be close to 400, with obvious disparity of living standards, the majority at every level. Some of them remain unknown, isolated and alienated, while others have adapted and evolved over time (Purkayastha 2016:3).

The word 'tribe' carries diverse connotations in different countries. However, in India the term 'tribe' refers to pre-literate localized social groups, the members of which speak a common dialect. Nithya (2014:729) further describes a tribe as a collection of families bearing a common name, speaking a common dialect, occupying or professing to occupy a common territory and is not usually endogamous though originally it might have been so. Multiple authors have described tribes by different terminology. Dr. Ghurye named them as 'backward Hindus',; and Das and Das renamed them as 'submerged humanity' (Mehta 2006:5). Other names used for them include Aborigines, Adivasi, Vanyajati, Vanavasi, among others (Parlikar 2016:6840; Venkatesu 2016:100; Vyas 2010:26). In the

Mahabharata, which is an ancient Indian literature epic, tribals are identified as Sabarars, or Dasyas (Kumar 2018:27). Much of this nomenclature was used primarily as a mark of identification and differentiation, that is, to mark out a group of people different in physical features, language, religion, custom, social organization and so on (Ambagudia 2011:34) but although may have been negatively influenced by prevailing negative stereotypes and perceptions at the time.

According to Article 342 of the Indian Constitution, there is no clear definition of the term 'tribe', with the closest reference being the term 'scheduled tribe' which is defined as "the tribe or the tribal communities or parts of, or group within tribes or tribal communities" (Kumar 2018:26; Mello 2018:16). These groups are assumed to form the ethnological sector of the population of India.

2.5.1.1 Characteristics of tribal communities

Purkayastha (2016:2-3) referred to a tribe or generally tribes in India, as having the following characteristics:

- They believe in blood relations between members;
- they believe that they descend from a common ancestor, either actual or mythical;
- socio-cultural institutions are also prevalent;
- they believe in supernatural power, magic, sorcery and witchcraft. These form integral aspects of tribal mechanical life; and
- tribal economy is mainly hunting, collecting and fishing or a combination of hunting and collecting with shifting cultivation.

Furthermore, according to Ghurye (cited in Purkayastha 2016:3-4) the purest of tribal groups resist accumulation or absorption, and also possess certain features which can be considered as common features if possessed by all tribal groups. These features include:

- living away from the civilised world in mostly inaccessible parts of both forests and hills;
- belonging either to one of three stocks- Negrito, Austroloid or Mongoloid;
- speaking the same tribal dialect;

- possessing a primitive religion known as animism in which worship of ghosts or spirits is the dominant element;
- engaging in primitive occupations such as gleaning, hunting and gathering of forest produce;
- largely carnivorous or flesh or meat eaters; and
- have nomadic habits and love for alcohol and dance.

Social development can refer to either a measurement of the quality of life in any given society, and any steps taken to redress the imbalances between different sectors, or the type of quality of life that should be aspired to in a developed society (Gray 2002:4). According to Gray (2002:7-8), certain key aspects of social development comprise of the alleviation of poverty, holistic sustainable development, the coming together of multiple sectors of society towards social progression, inclusive social welfare, and the evolution of human and social capital taking into account the essentiality of involving people in their own self development. Thus, social development forms a vital component of the attempts of tribal or marginalised communities to enhance their current way of life.

According to Tandon and Singh (2017:1), the unsustainable socio-economic conditions hampering Indian rural societies, even after 70 years of independence is nothing short of a distressed situation. They stated that it is vital to dedicate resources to rectify this, and for this to happen, higher education, traditionally recognized as ‘public institutions’, are required to step in. With the plethora of knowledge and resources at their disposal they argued that, academic institutions can ably pursue the agenda of sustainable development of rural societies and one of the most appropriate tools for facilitating this is “community engagement” (Tandon and Singh 2017:1).

The core purpose of such engagement is to realise mutual interests of universities and their communities. In practice, this can be practically implemented in several ways such as engaged scholarship practices like service learning and community based participatory research.

2.6 Benefits of the engaged university

Of late, community engagement has been prioritised at higher education institutions, as it has been perceived to be a valuable activity for university students. Since universities are viewed as responsible entities in society, university-community engagement activities are regarded as urgent responses in helping the needy (Farish 2014:50). Therefore, participation of students from the higher institutions of learning is paramount in ensuring the smooth running of community engagement within the higher education framework (Finn and Voelkl cited in Nasir *et al.* 2017:209).

Community-university engagement provides universities with a chance to raise their ranking level, both nationally and internationally, as a result of the increasing importance placed on socially relevant knowledge development, upon the ranking of universities (Jongbloed, Enders and Salerno 2008:321; Singh 2017:10-11). Hence, opportunities for internationalizing the university through shared research, scholarship, and service are advanced, along with assisting universities to demonstrate accountability in an era replete with calls for greater scrutiny and demands for return on investment (Fitzgerald *et al.* 2016:230).

For researchers, university-community engagement provides a basis to understand realities through their research, subsequently increasing their level of knowledge, while their individual academic authenticity and professional integrity are also augmented (Trowler 2010:31; Singh 2017:8). Undergraduates that participate in community service are more receptive to “encounter new perspectives on the world through the development of connections with others” (Soria, Nobbe and Fink 2013:119). Upon students encountering diversity and disparity via community service and engagement, these community endeavours can function as a catalyst for reflective analysis and the self-questioning of pre-developed assumptions (McGowan *et al.* 2013 cited in Soria and Mitchell 2016:84). Eyler and Giles (1999:141) also claimed that community-based initiatives could potentially spur transformative learning opportunities for students, noting that “transformational learning occurs when individuals confront disorienting dilemmas; perspective transformation becomes possible when this dilemma raises questions about fundamental assumptions”. In addition to challenging their assumptions, students in turn develop a greater appreciation for diversity. Subsequently, adjustments in their interpretation of others are depicted by “the reduction of negative stereotypes” (Eyler and Giles 1999:29) and motivated through the newfound larger appreciation for diversity. Concurrently, with students being in touch with societal realities and the challenges of

sustainability and livelihoods, a sense of civic duty and responsibility is inculcated amongst them towards the society they form a part of (Kuh 2009a: 698; Trowler 2010:32).

Millican and Bourner (2011:91-92) argued that learning within a community engagement context holds the following potential benefits for students and higher education institutions:

- it can provide a reference for certain subjects and a platform to implement the theory acquired on campus;
- by developing their teamwork and communication skills, employability of students can be increased;
- the academic performance of students may be improved; and
- students are afforded opportunities to gain superior self-knowledge, including knowledge of their own strengths and values.

In their book, *Deepening Community Engagement*, Hoy and Johnston (2013: xviii) argued that engagement should be "more pervasive, deep, and integrated with the core of the institution" for genuine transformation to occur. In considering this very claim of creating community engagement experiences that are more pervasive, deep, and integrated, Mitchell (2013:263) envisioned the impact would be widespread, and transformative for students who, by effectively linking critical inquiry and community engagement, will gain the knowledge, skills, and values to create more equitable systems for future public aid. They are also transformative for communities where, through partnerships with higher education institutions, innovatively implement opportunities to address critical community issues. Higher education institutions are transformed as community engagement adjusts the manner in which faculty members teach and research, the ways students learn and develop, and how lines between the campus and community are blurred and reconfigured.

Community engagement strategies and skills can build trust and reduce historical mistrust among researchers, communities and the populations being studied, as well as contribute to the quality of study designs, methods and the dissemination of findings (Brenner and Manice 2011:85). The benefits, as previously mentioned, that community engagement provides to all applicable stakeholders, namely higher education institutions, academics, and the community themselves are quite numerous. According to Dunleavy, Milton and Crawford (2010:1), community engagement provides students with chances to interact with communities in order to understand and assist to solve the problems that these

communities face. As a result, community engagement may encourage strengthened levels of moral and social responsibility. The section that follows, contains literature on the more common types of community engagement practiced in higher education, i.e. service learning, student volunteerism, community outreach and community based research.

2.7 FORMS OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

2.7.1 SERVICE LEARNING

Service learning was developed as a means of promoting university community engagement (Wilhite and Silver cited in Charles *et al.* 2014:3). It is meant to be a reciprocal partnership between the university, students and the community that is beneficial to each entity (Furco 1996:5; Bushouse, 2005:32, Phillips, 2011:3; Rooks and Winkler, 2012:19; Bringle *et al.* 2016:3). Moreover, service learning has been noted to link community service to course content and converts theory into practice (Bowen 2014:51; Crutchfield *et.al* 2016:3). According to Harkavy (cited in Lemieux and Allen 2007:309), there are three pillars of academic service learning being student learning, service to the community, and jointly favourable student-community relationships. Social work therefore, which prioritises social justice and the resolution of social ills, is a natural fit to curricular innovations that embrace student reflection, community service, and empowerment-oriented mutual collaboration with community residents. This is further embellished as academic service learning has stimulated the intellectual interest of social work educators (e.g., Ishisaka *et al.* 2004:329; Lowe and Reisch 1998:292 and Rocha and Johnson 1997:442), who have validated the historical impact of community-based learning as a beacon of social work education (Lemieux and Allen 2007:309).

Institutions of higher education embrace service-learning as a high-impact pedagogical tool (Felten and Clayton, 2011:76; Meyers, 2009:373). The signing of The National and Community Services Trust Act of 1993 has to some measure accelerated the service-learning pedagogy within the social work education sector, which reaffirmed “higher education's commitment to solving social problems in the communities in which such institutions reside” (Lemieux and Allen 2007:309). Existing application research regarding service learning in social work education, advocates that there are underlying benefits for students (Butin 2003:1686; Lane 2008:1; Bryant 2011:63).

The following sub-sections focuses on definitions of service learning along with the benefits and challenges of service learning. Service learning is emphasized as this formed the crux of the student's placements with the tribal community within this study.

2.7.1.1 Definitions of Service Learning

Service learning is a type of “applied learning which is aimed at specific community needs and is integrated into an academic programme and curriculum. It could be credit bearing and assessed, and may or may not take place in a work environment” (HEQC 2004:26). Thomson *et al.* (2011:216) argued that service learning is a pedagogical strategy that links students with communities. Identifying specific educational and community goals for both parties reinforces this. Subsequently, service learning is viewed as a method for augmenting the relationships between the campus and relevant communities. This corresponds with Bringle’s (1996:112) definition of service learning as “a course-based, educational experience in which students: (a) participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and (b) reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility”. Service-learning activities are not isolated; they are formulated to meet course objectives and are weighted into computation of the final course grade (Schelbe, Petracchi, and Addie Weaver 2014:3). This is consistent with the current inquiry in this study. The nature of globalisation in all facets of society has also embedded itself in service learning, as the quickest rate of expansion among service learning programs are those that favour international perspectives and global citizenship. The University of Mumbai implements community engagement activity that can be envisioned as both service learning and applied learning as students from the Social Work Department are credited for the community-based fieldwork that they engage in.

2.7.1.2 Benefits of Service Learning

There is an extensive body of research indicating the benefits of service-learning programs for students, among which are the development of critical thinking skills, enhanced communication skills and self-knowledge, greater civic engagement and political awareness, superior technical and analytical skills, and a strengthened ability to work collaboratively (Egeru 2016:166; Schamber and Mahoney 2008:76; Steinberg, Hatcher and Bringle 2011:22).

In their meta-analysis, Yorio and Ye (2012:25) discovered that students who participate in service learning commonly “demonstrate a more positive understanding of social issues, alter their personal insight, and experience gains in cognitive development”. Similarly, Cronley *et al.* (2014:156) stipulated that social work educators’ use of service learning is

established on the premise that it positively impacts students' individual development and their capability to resolve moral and ethical predicaments.

Higher education institutions can improve their immediate relevance to local communities by creating sustained service learning projects that help to solve urgent issues or difficulties. This would aid institutions, to reinforce their relationship with the local community. From an individual faculty member perspective, service learning serves to add motivation to teaching, by translating theoretical knowledge into practical implementation and further strengthens facilitator-student interaction, through the achievement of mutual goals (Pribbenow 2005:32).

Furthermore, service learning also impacts positively on communities by providing multi-disciplinary support on actual projects that improve the economic, social and physical environments, along with helping to establish access and connections to other required resources available at the institution (Shelton and Williams 2016:64). According to Shelton and Williams (2016:64) the benefits of service learning for students, faculty, and community partners, mentioned above, should reinforce the urgency regarding the importance of implementing service learning comprehensively into all curricula, across all fields of study, globally.

2.7.1.3 Challenges of Service Learning

While service learning has a myriad documented benefits for institutions, academics and students, there is also literature available that highlights challenges with implementing service learning to social work education. Poulin *et al.* (2006) conducted a study that highlighted difficulties students experienced while implementing service learning. These include scarcity of workspace, inadequate organization structure, dearth of clarity in terms of staff roles, and a need for additional staff training; all of which are seen as vital to supporting service-learning (Schelbe *et al.* 2014:5). The faculty workload and time required to implement service-learning has also been acknowledged as potential drawbacks (Brown 2015:4-5; Jones 2011:109; Lemieux and Allen 2007:317). Service learning may also not be feasible as a result of students' class and field education schedules, course workload in the specified timeframe, and agency requirements (Kapp 2006 cited in Schelbe *et al.* 2014:5). Other potential practical and ethical challenges related to implementing service-learning include power imbalances, reporting abuse and neglect and closure at the conclusion of the project (Donaldson and Daughtery 2011:1). To date, these

changes cited in the literature have been largely descriptive observations. The demands on students, faculty, and agencies involved in service-learning projects should not also be overlooked. These challenges may be related to the perceived reluctance of social work educators to embrace service-learning (Schelbe *et al.* 2014:5). Moreover, even as the body of evidence is growing for the use of service learning in social work, some have argued that more research is needed to assess its “goodness of fit” or in other words, suitability and appropriateness as an effective teaching-learning approach in this context (Charles, Alexander, and Oliver 2014:1; Lemieux and Allen 2007:321; Phillips 2011:9).

2.7.2 STUDENT VOLUNTEERISM

Within the higher education spectrum, academic service learning is comprised of a multitude of forms and is integrated into course work in various formats. Volunteering can be categorised as such a format, which has also often been classified as service learning in social work education (Phillips 2011:2; Curl and Benner 2017:2). However, it is essential to distinguish that volunteerism is neither service learning nor social work education’s signature pedagogy; field education (O’Connor *et al.* 2011:10).

According to Huiting (cited in Adekalu *et al.* 2017:92-93) “volunteerism involves rendering of service by choice or freewill for the benefit of the wider community by an individual, group, or societies, and institution without necessarily expecting monetary gain in full knowledge and appreciation of being a volunteer”. In addition, Demir, Khanna and Bowling (2015: 104) stated that from a student viewpoint, volunteerism consists of unpaid, optional, externally directed, formal activities conducted inside and outside the university milieu. Moreover, Cress (2005:7) defined volunteerism as students who are engaged in activities aimed at service for the sake of the beneficiary or recipient (client, partner). The HEQC (2006b:22) and (HEQC/JET 2007a:143) concurred that, with volunteerism, the primary beneficiary is the recipient (community) and the essential goal is provision of a service. Volunteer programmes are fundamentally altruistic, as they have been designed to benefit the service recipient. Although students may acquire knowledge through these programmes, they may not necessarily form part of the student’s prescribed curriculum. Volunteer programmes are typically small in scale and fall under extra-curricular activities, which take place during school holidays and outside tuition time. Commonly, students do not receive any academic credit for their volunteer work, and volunteer programmes are funded by external donors in conjunction with student fundraising efforts. Briere and

Foulkrod (2011:146-147) state that in spite of the commonly accepted definition of volunteerism being rather unappealing to students in higher education, volunteerism can still be a beneficial and valuable avenue for universities to pursue.

Student volunteerism is a unique form of volunteerism considering that it occurs within the structure of a higher education domain. Student societies can be considered change agent vehicles at higher education institutions and as such are referred to as “a group dedicated to a cause in a domain such as culture, politics, or social action, guided by a constitution and elected posts” (MacNeela and Gannon 2014:410).

2.7.3 COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Community outreach is another form of community engagement. The aim of community outreach is, congruent with volunteerism, and aims to provide a service (primary focus) to the recipient or community (primary beneficiary). The most identifiable difference between the two is that student engagement in community activities, is largely more structured, and more commitment is required from the students.

Community outreach programmes are generally initiated from within the higher education institution by a department or academic staff member. As the service, progresses to greater integration within the academic module and the students begin to engage in formal intellectual dialogue about service issues, the programme shifts closer to the crux of the continuum to become more like service learning. A further distinguishing characteristic that differentiates academically based community outreach programmes from service learning is that the former tend to be an activity and initiative of the higher education institution, whereas service learning forms part of the prescribed curriculum (HEQC 2006a:22-23).

According to Byrne (2016:54) outreach is defined as a means by which the institution involves the people and organizations in the surrounding environment, as well as transfers knowledge and utilises technology to its relevant constituents. Furthermore, outreach is categorised as reciprocal communication between the university and stakeholders that establishes and fosters mutual understanding, stimulates participation and involvement and influences behaviours, attitudes and actions (Okaka 2013:5-6). In essence, community outreach entails reaching out to community members who are unaware of the resources of the institution, and informing them accordingly while providing accessibility to said resources. Outreach then can be defined as education about problems related to a study, theories, and interventions that is interlinked with a campaign (Riesch *et al.* 2013:3).

Buck (2009:74) additionally listed key characteristics of outreach as engagement with vulnerable, oppressed, and hard-to-reach communities.

According to Okaka (2013:6), outreach efforts have the following benefits;

- There is sharing of resources and exchange of ideas;
- outreach can stimulate behavioural change and the implementation of risk/harm reduction modalities among the targeted groups; and
- it increases community awareness together with establishing an effective collaborative partnership that impacts the community in a positive manner (Mitter *et al.* 2014:302).

2.7.4 FIELDWORK PRACTICUM

Fieldwork, which is also variously known as field instruction, field placement, field education, practicum or internship (Schmidt and Rautenbach 2016:591; Jeyarani and Jebaseelan 2017:1) is considered to be the most vital part of social work education (Azeez 2015:21; Dhemba 2012:1), and has even been described as the “signature pedagogy” of the social work profession (Wayne, Bogo and Raskin 2010:327; Maynard *et al.* 2015:519). It is useful to distinguish the terminology of fieldwork and opposed to service learning. As stated by Lemieux and Allen (2007:312) “with fieldwork practice, the emphasis is on developing student knowledge and skills whereas with service learning, the requirements of the community they are serving determines the role of the student”.

A commonly used definition of fieldwork is one by Hamilton and Else (1993 cited in Dhemba 2012:2) who viewed it as, “a consciously planned set of experiences occurring in a practice setting designed to move students from their initial level of understanding, skills and attitudes to a level associated with autonomous social work practice”. In addition, Uche *et al.* (2014:1329) further described fieldwork as a place to understand, apply and integrate theory and practice, and where fundamentals of practice, policy, human behaviour, and research taught in the classroom are tested and consolidated. It is in this context that educational principles are balanced with the reality of agency based and community based practice and the demands of service delivery. According to Noronha and Monteiro (2016:292), “field work comprises of working with the social welfare agencies, non- government agencies, government agencies or any organisation involved in helping individuals, groups or communities to enhance their social functioning or to enable them to cope with their problems.”

Generally, fieldwork practicum in India consists of observation visits, concurrent visits, and block placements. Concurrent fieldwork is the compulsory component of social work education in India, in which students are sent to an agency or placed in a community consisting of a two day field work procedure in a week as a module (Azeez 2015:22; Johnson *et al.* 2012:23). Rural villages are preferred to be the potential locations for student's placement for the concurrent field work as it facilitates the trainee to understand the magnitude of the social context, rural problems, possible intervention strategies and working models (Azeez 2015:22).

2.7.4.1 Benefits of Fieldwork Practicum

Fieldwork provides an opportunity for students to connect theoretical education and fieldwork practice (Kirke *et al.* 2007:15; Papouli 2014:5; Jeyarani and Jebaseelan 2017:1). However, according to Azeez (2015:22) fieldwork is not merely the application of theory into practice as traditionally acknowledged, it is a concerted effort to experience, explore and analyse the social work practice in real life settings, in which social work professionals become imbued with the abilities, competence and proficiency that aids them to perceive the socio economic, cultural and political on-goings in their respective environments.

Fieldwork allows for the inculcation of humanistic values and development of professional attitudes. In addition, it enriches knowledge and understanding, and imparts discrimination to deal with human problems on personal, intra personal, and environmental interaction levels (Singh 1997 cited in Azeez 2015:22). Additionally, fieldwork provides a platform for testing and validating theoretical underpinnings and practice coursework in a practical setting with various sections of the population that experience assorted issues. Fieldwork placement has been greatly commended for its impact in enhancing student skills, knowledge and capabilities by allowing the amalgamation of theoretical learning with the actualities of agency practice (Hanlen 2011:223). The underpinning tenet of field instruction is progression, with the belief that students will simultaneously progress academically and within the intricacy of their fieldwork experience (Savaya *et al.* 2003:297).

The placement in open communities, which is an Indian model of concurrent fieldwork, is widely practiced in India. Open community placements enlighten the students with a comprehensive understanding of the context of social work practice; diversity, disadvantages, marginalization, vulnerability, power relations, the lack of access to

resources, discriminations, importance of status and roles, strategies for mobilization and utilization of resources. Recognition of these factors is the core of social work practice in a country like India. As an academically structured and defined initiative, fieldwork in community allows the students to develop the wisdom to analyze these structural and functional issues (Azeez 2015:24). In addition, according to Nasir *et al.* (2017:206) experiences gained through the fieldwork will help the students in preparing themselves for future careers especially in revitalizing their civic consciousness of the society around them.

2.7.5 COMMUNITY BASED RESEARCH

Community-based research (CBR), as one of the fundamental strands of community-university engagement initiatives, has gained increased currency and adoption (Hall *et al.* 2015:13). Research approaches that emphasise community-engagement are referred to by multiple terms, as including participatory action research, community-based participatory research, action research and community-engaged scholarship (Taylor and Ochocka 2017:184; Wiebe and Taylor 2014:6). However it is “CBR” that is most commonly recognised internationally, as demonstrated by the establishment of the UNESCO chairs of CBR and social responsibility in higher education (Hall *et al.* 2015:1).

Community-based research strives to connect communities and civil society organisations with higher education institutions (HEIs) by way of both student and staff research activities. The basis of community-based research is a research question or hypothesis generated by, and of relevance to, the community (McIlrath *et al.* 2014:102). Community in this instance can be comprised of various proponents ranging from local cooperatives, through voluntary or not-for profit organisations such as mental health charities, community gardens to local communities identified by a clear geographical affiliation. It could also consist of communities of interest around a mutual topic of concern such as the local economy, health, housing, or crime, all of whom are seeking collective social action (Strand *et al.* 2003:5).

2.7.5.1 Definitions of Community Based Research

According to Strand *et al.* (2003:3) community-based research is “the systematic creation of knowledge that is done with and for the community for the purpose of addressing a community-identified need”. In addition, the term community based research is defined by the Community Health Scholars Programmes (2001 cited in McIlrath *et al.* 2014:103) as a collaborative approach to research that uniformly includes all parties in the research process and recognizes the distinctive strengths that each bring, as community-based research is generally initiated with a research topic of importance to the community and has the aim of uniting knowledge with action that results in social change.

Since the intention is to create mutually beneficial and sustainable partnerships between higher education institutions and the local communities, it must be noted that the “flow” of resources and knowledge does not travel solely from higher education institutions to the community. The community provides its own strengths, knowledge, understanding and discrimination, locally derived questions and capacity to the research relationship, and contributes to the training and civic engagement of student researchers and the higher education institutions.

A more recent description portrays community-based research as a powerful facilitator in addressing complex social, economic, health and environmental challenges that necessitate the active participation of diverse organisations and individuals (Spilker *et al.* 2016:3). This research approach propagates the philosophy of “knowledge democracy” in which community members are complete partners in research that impacts their existence (Hall 2011:14).

2.7.5.2 Benefits of Community Based Research

Community-based research promotes equity by providing a platform for community groups that may feel excluded or otherwise intimidated from higher education institutions in their locality. The community-based research knowledge production process, has an explicit goal of converting the findings of the research process, into tangible action for change at community and/or national level. This action seeks to positively impact on communities and society. Tackling environmental issues, addressing and highlighting social justice concerns, and developing new technological solutions to support communities and citizens are some of the objectives of community-based research. The goals and outcomes of

community-based research are geared toward immediate application prioritised on solutions and changes (Small and Uttal 2005:947; Wiebe and Taylor 2014:13).

There are practical advantages in identifying community members as knowledge-rich partners where community wisdom and experiential knowledge are placed on equivalent footing with the scientific or technical expertise of universities (Hart *et al.* 2013:13; Small and Uttal 2005:938; Ochocka and Janzen 2014:18). Consequently, community engagement co-creates knowledge to maximise research utilisation (Small and Uttal 2005:938; Wallerstein and Duran 2003:27). From a theoretical viewpoint, the community is an imperative component in developing research questions and in refining theory, which is fully utilised as part of community-based research (Cargo and Mercer 2008:333).

In summary, community-based research is a multifaceted approach that engages diverse partners in the mutual development and co-mobilisation of knowledge. It intends to be community-situated, collaborative, and action-oriented such that the research process and results are relevant and useful to community members in making positive societal changes (Ochocka and Janzen 2014:30; Hall 2011:14).

Future directions among community-based research are promising. Indigenous and traditional populations i.e. rural, reserve, remote and urban, continue to seek ways to express their cultural sovereignty, while partnering with institutions to solve community problems through science and education (Ferreira and Gendron 2011:153-154).

2.8 CONCLUSION

Community engagement both internationally and in the Indian context were analysed in the literature review. Social development as a structural tool was utilized as an integral aspect in the ongoing aid and support of tribal communities to improve their current situations. Academic institutions further contribute to this, as a part of mutually beneficial outcome, by utilizing their resources, knowledge and skills in these endeavours. Greater attention was provided to social work in India, with specific reference to tribals. Thereafter, multiple forms of community engagement were discussed, along with its benefits to and impact on relevant stakeholders. Chapter Three will outline the research design and methodology of the study and the data collection methods used.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Rajasekar, Philominathan and Chinnathambi (2013:5) described research methodology as a science that systematically finds a way of solving a problem by describing, explaining and predicting phenomena. Two approaches are primarily employed by researchers, namely the qualitative and quantitative approaches. A qualitative approach was used to guide this study. This chapter presents an in-depth description of the data collection methods and analysis procedures utilized. It also informs of the physical location, design of the study and the population sample. The data collection tools utilised viz. the interview guide and focus group guide, are also described.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is described as a plan or blueprint of how you intend conducting the research (Burns and Grove 2011:49; Babbie and Mouton 2011:74). Kumar (2005:84) further described the research design as “a plan, a structure and a strategy of investigation that is developed to obtain answers to research questions and/or problems” a layout, a framework and a strategy of inquiry that is formulated to acquire answers to research questions and/or problems.

In this study the researcher used a qualitative research design. A qualitative research design is the “logic that links data to be collected (and the conclusions to be drawn) to the initial questions of the study” (Yin 2009:24). In this study, the qualitative aspects mainly emphasised definition, experience and comprehension; which then gave the researcher the opportunity to interact with individuals or groups whose experiences the researcher wanted to understand. According to Silverman (2001:48), qualitative research can provide a deeper understanding of the social phenomenon, which in this case is the impact of community engagement on tribal communities. A quantitative approach was not suited for this study because the information needed was not based on statistical or numerical forms such as percentage, but rather on participants’ opinions, views and understanding of community engagement. The researcher collected data from social work students, as well as academics from the Social Work Department at the University of Mumbai.

3.3 STUDY SETTING

The research setting refers to the place where the data is collected. The study was set in Maharashtra, India and was part of a National Research Foundation study which explored community engagement in the international context. Given that a best practice project was being implemented by the University of Mumbai (previously known as the University of Bombay), a collaboration was formed with the late Dr Chandrakant Puri from the Social Work Department to pursue this study in a rural area outside Mumbai, India. The actual interviews took place at the site where students conducted their fieldwork, in Jambhulpada, a small village situated in a rural part of the Nashik district of Maharashtra. It has a total population of 785 inhabitants and 184 houses, located just 36 km away from the University of Mumbai. The University of Mumbai stands among the earliest established, and premium Universities in India. It was established in 1857 in accordance with "Wood's Education Dispatch", and it was one of the first three Universities in India.

3.4 STUDY POPULATION AND SAMPLE

3.4.1 Study Population

According to Osuala (2001:55) a population is classified as the total number of persons or objects identified by the study or with which the study is concerned. Similarly Sekaran and Bougie (2016:236) defined a population as an entire group of people, events, or things which a researcher desires to research. Polit and Beck (2012:274) further described a population as people who comprise of similar characteristics and who are eligible to be included the study. For the purposes of this study, the population refers to the students and academics from the University of Mumbai. The University of Mumbai had approximately 84000 registered students and 350 academic staff in 2016.

3.4.2 Study Sample

Sampling is defined as “the segment of the population that is selected for investigation, it is a subset of the population” (Bryman and Bell 2003:93). Crouch and Housden (2003:149) further described sampling as “a limited number taken from a large group for testing and analysis, on the assumption that the sample can be taken as representative of the whole group”.

The sample comprised of students along with academics from the Social Work Department at University of Mumbai, that were well informed about spirituality and community engagement. These participants were selected as they had conducted field work among the tribes in Maharashtra as part of their practicum, which enabled them to gain detailed first-hand knowledge and understanding of traditions, beliefs and value systems of the aforementioned tribes. This aided the researcher in securing rich valuable information with regards to the study objectives.

A qualitative research paradigm, in its broadest sense, refers to research that elicits participants accounts of meaning, experience or perceptions. Descriptive data from the participant's first person perspective is generated (De Vos *et al.* 2002:79), and prioritises non-statistical methods and small purposively selected samples. The researcher intended to work with two samples. The relationship between the samples and objectives are reflected in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Relationship between the samples and objectives

Sample	Objectives
1. Academics (n=6) Data collected till saturation	To inquire about how tribal communities are conceptualised in rural India. To explore the university process of engaging with tribal communities.
2. Students (n=23) Data collected till saturation	To understand the spiritual beliefs and practices of tribal communities in India. To understand how community based teaching and learning occurs in tribal communities.

Fusch and Ness (2015:1408) stated that “failure to reach saturation has an impact on the quality of the research conducted”. Data saturation occurs when there can no longer be any relevant information acquired, and the study reaches the limit of material on the research objective (Korstjens and Moser 2017:11). The researcher collected data till saturation, which enabled a comprehensive and credible analysis of the data.

3.5 SAMPLING PROCESS

There are two distinct sampling methods that can be utilised viz. probability and non-probability sampling. Non-probability sampling means that the members of a population do not have an equal opportunity of being selected in a sample, and also does not allow the researcher to determine the likelihood of each sample member being selected (Daniel 2015:511-552).

Four methods can be used to identify a non-probability sampling i.e. convenience sampling, quota sampling, purposive sampling and snowball sampling (Latham 2007:7). The researcher utilised a non-probability sampling strategy consisting of purposive techniques that facilitated selection of participants who could serve the intention of the study by answering the research questions, which in this case essentially comprised of students and academics from the Social Work Department who were well informed on community engagement and spirituality amongst tribal people.

Purposeful sampling is widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest (Palinkas *et al.* 2015:533). As further simplified by Bernard (2002:147) purposeful sampling occurs when the researcher establishes the required parameters, which then necessitates respondents that are able to, and are prepared to supply the required information namely through primary knowledge or experience. The inclusion and exclusion criteria as detailed in this chapter informed the sampling method.

3.5.1 Inclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria are certain conditions that must be fulfilled in order to be included as part of the study.

The inclusion criteria in this study consisted of the following:

- All Masters students and academics that were part of the Social Work Department at the University of Mumbai.
- All Masters students and academics who had engaged with the tribal community.

3.5.2 Exclusion criteria

Exclusion criteria are a set of conditions that exclude elements from participation.

The exclusion criteria in this study included:

- All Masters students and academics who were not part of the Social Work Department at the University of Mumbai.
- Students and academics who did not engage with the tribal community.

3.6 DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

As stated by Dörnyei (2007:132), qualitative data is most commonly gathered either through interviews or questionnaires. Contrasting these methods, it is found that interviews, in comparison to questionnaires, are more useful in sourcing narrative data that enables researchers to analyse collected viewpoints in greater detail (Kvale 1996:2003). In a similar vein, Cohen *et al.* (2007:29) added that interviewing is “a valuable method for exploring the construction and negotiation of meanings in a natural setting”. Essentially, interviewing provides a comprehensive summary by analysing statements and placing on record thorough opinions of respondents, while concurrently providing a platform for interviewees “speak in their own voice and express their own thoughts and feelings” (Berg 2007:96). An additional definition is attributed to Schostak (2006:54) wherein an interview is presented as an extendable conversation between partners that results in obtaining ‘in-depth information’ on a particular topic or subject, and through which a phenomenon could be interpreted from the perspective of the participants.

Interviews were chosen as the primary method of data collection in this research. The interview method was identified as the most salient in the study, because it has the potential

to elicit rich, thick descriptions. Further, it gives the researcher an opportunity to clarify statements and probe for additional information. Interviews are typically classified as being structured, semi structured, or open-ended (Mertler 2017:8). Interviews can be conducted with individuals or with groups.

Semi structured interviews were conducted with the first sample. According to Mansourian (2008:281) a semi-structured format allows "both the interviewee and the interviewer to discuss anything which they might find useful or related to the topic". In these interviews, the researcher has a set of topics to work through in the interview but not a set of standard questions. The interview flows like a directed conversation and through the set of topics (Byrne 2017:8). The number, order and nature of questions may vary from one interview to the next and is dependent on the context and situation within which the interview takes place. An interview guide will be used to guide this study (refer to Appendix 6).

A focus group discussion was used for sample two. This method of data gathering consists mainly of obtaining data through the interactional dynamic between participants, while also determining group diversity conclusively. Struwig and Stead (2013:99) viewed focus groups as planned discussions that generate opinions on an issue in a non-judgemental way and in an accepting, safe environment. A focus group guide will be used to guide this study (refer to Appendix 7).

Permission for the interviews to be recorded was obtained from all participants prior to commencing.

3.7 PROCEDURE FOR DATA COLLECTION

The researcher had made contact with the Chair Professor, Dr Chandrakant Puri from the Department of Social Work at the University of Mumbai, to arrange for data collection. Dr Puri was approached to be the co-supervisor in the current study as he has extensive experience in working with socially excluded communities. Dr Puri had designed the curriculum for MA in Social Exclusion & Inclusive Policy Studies and pioneered a PhD for Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy Studies, which is the first of its kind in India. He continued to pursue field action and research with excluded communities such as Tribals, Dalits and Nomadic and De-notified Tribes in Maharashtra. Thus the data collection process included all Masters students and academics from the Social Work Department at the

University of Mumbai, as they were involved in community engagement with the tribal community, under the guidance of Dr Puri.

The researcher had made a research visit via flight to the University of Mumbai in India during the month of November 2017. The University of Mumbai was responsible for setting up the interviews and focus group sessions for the researcher from the Durban University of Technology, as the study was co-supervised with a member of staff from the University of Mumbai. The co-supervisor had liaised with the students and academics for the preparation of data collection. Once all arrangements had been made, the researcher then conducted a series of focus group discussions with students and semi-structured interviews with academics. Both interviews and focus group discussions were tape recorded, with permission from the participants. Participation was voluntary and if a participant wished to withdraw from the study, he/ she was allowed to do so. All sample participants contributed to the data collection. Before each interview and focus group discussion, a letter of information (refer to Appendix 2 and 4) and informed consent (refer to Appendix 3 and 5) was given to each participant. The focus group discussions and interviews took place at Jambhulpada, Maharashtra. This is the site where students conducted their field work and it was deemed most convenient for both students and academics, as the students were immersed in the tribal community for a period of two weeks. A focus group guide and interview schedule was used to guide the sessions (refer to Appendix 7 and 6).

3.7.1 The data collection tools used

The following data collection tools were used in this study viz. interview guide and focus group guide. The data collection tool for each sample is reflected in the table 2 below.

Table 2: Sample and data collection instruments

Sample	Data collection tool
1. Sample 1 (Academics)	Interview guide
2. Sample 2 (Students)	Focus group guide

3.7.1.1 The interview guide

According to Byrne (2017:8) prior to conducting any interviews, it is best to establish an interview guide which consists of either specific or generic questions to be asked, dependent on the intended outcomes. Interview schedules (refer to Appendix 5) will be used in data collection. An interview schedule was defined by Greef (2002:302) as “a questionnaire written to guide interviews”. Such a schedule provides the researcher with a set of predetermined questions. Drawing up a schedule in advance "forces researchers to think explicitly about what they hope the interview might cover" (De Vos *et al.* 2011:352).

3.7.1.2 The focus group guide

The focus group guide was used as a tool, to guide the focus group discussions (refer to Appendix 7). The focus group guide assists the researcher in keeping group discussions focused in a certain area. It provides enough structure and direction to stop the discussion moving away from the original topic (Dawson *et al.* 1993 cited in Chrzan and Brett 2017:107). Probing questions or areas to be examined was outlined in the guide.

3.7.2 INTERVIEW AND FOCUS GROUP SETTING

The interviews and focus group were conducted during the month of November 2017. The dates for data collection was arranged by the co-supervisor, Dr Chandrakant Puri. For convenience purposes, the focus group discussions took place in a pre-selected quiet, comfortable, relaxed, friendly and controlled environment (Patton and Cochran 2002:18; De Vos *et al.* 2011:360). This also gave the researcher the best possible chance of collecting good quality data.

3.7.3 Interview process

The recording of the interview data was obtained by the method of taking notes along with audio recording as prescribed by Huberman and Miles (2002:92) and De Vos *et al.* (2005:334). The note-taking served as an auxiliary recording measure and as a back-up procedure should consent not have been obtained from the participants to record the interview by means of an audio recorder. Interviews with academics occurred close to a school where students conducted their fieldwork, as it was most practical for all involved.

The initial task was to establish a friendly, secure and cooperative relationship with the participants while expressing gratitude for their willingness to partake in the research. The utmost privacy and discretion regarding the respondents in the process was maintained. The research premise and associated intentions were also communicated that the participants used as essential vital information, to make an unbiased choice regarding interview participation. The structure and order of questioning were also explained before the actual interview. The interview duration and pace were constantly monitored (Breen 2006:469). A cover letter detailing the breakdown of all the preceding information was subsequently provided to all participants in the process.

3.7.4 The process for focus group discussion

A focus group discussion was used for sample one. Focus group discussions permit the researcher to observe peoples' different perceptions, attitudes and experiences as they operate within a social network and they allow for the examination of how the expression of accounts is influenced by group norms (McMillan 2008:282). The group often consists of 5 to 12 members. The intention when employing focus group interviews is to generate collective and more expansive data for a wider, more detailed comprehension of the research topic in line with the research purpose (De Vos *et al.* 2005 312; Breen 2006:466). Thus, focus group discussions were deemed suitable for this study as it sought to inquire more about how tribal communities are conceptualised in rural India.

The unedited responses of participants display some of their views, experiences and feelings on the research topic while also facilitating new insights which reinforced existing results (Sekaran 2006:296). De Vos *et al.* (2005:313) considered the benefit of a focus group discussion to be as the ability of group interaction, to unearth valuable data that might have not been discovered where methods of individual data generation had been conducted. At the commencement of the prior mentioned focus group interviews, a welcoming address was delivered, followed by a concise outline of the research topic and purpose. Attention was given in combining the role of researcher with the role of facilitator relative to the dynamics of each specific group that assisted to construct an interactive and participative atmosphere wherein all participants were afforded the platform to freely express their opinions (Denzin and Lincoln 2005:704; Breen 2006:464; Mertler 2006: 97,98). These conversations were subsequently audio-recorded for the intentions of transcribing, analysis and integration.

3.8 DATA CAPTURING AND DATA ANALYSIS

3.8.1 Data Capturing

Data was captured using a tape recorder. In addition field notes were taken for both interviews and focus group discussions. Field notes assist the researcher to uphold and comment upon impressions, environmental situations, behaviours, and nonverbal cues which could possibly not have been convincingly enough gathered from the audio-recording (Sutton and Austin 2015:227). Consent to record interviews and focus group discussions were first obtained from all participants. The recordings were stored on restricted access-computers with password protection so that only the researcher and co-supervisor had access to it. The researcher began to transcribe the audio recordings in their entirety (word for word) soon after all the interviews and focus group discussions had been done; this ensured that no data was lost and that the exact expressions of the participants were respected (Meunier-Beillard 2017:4). An additional advantage of transcribing of the interviews is providing the researcher with the chance to acclimatise with the interview contents. According to Braun and Clarke (2006:18), rather than transcription being erroneously classified as a wasted activity, it actually advises the primary stages of analysis and helps expedite a more methodical understanding of data.

After the transcribing of the data and typing of the field notes, the researcher sent the transcription to the participants for verification (member checks) a procedure that enhances the credibility and validity of qualitative research (Thomas 2017:39).

3.8.2 Data analysis

Data analysis was described by De Vos *et al.* (2005:333) as “the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data.” In qualitative research, data analysis and data collection are conducted concurrently. Qualitative data analysis focuses on opinions, feelings, thoughts and emotions, rather than figures and calculations (Babbie and Mouton 2001:359; Polit and Beck 2012:508).

Thematic analysis will be used to make sense of and analyse the data obtained during the focus group discussions and interviews. Thematic analysis has been described as “a foundational method for qualitative analysis” (Braun and Clarke 2006:78). Thematic analysis can be identified as a flexible and valuable research aid that in essence is impartial to theory. Thus, it can be applied within a variety of theoretical and epistemological frameworks. Furthermore, it has the potential to yield a detailed, abundant and complex

description of data (Braun and Clarke 2006:30). Though there are many advantages there are also disadvantages (Braun and Clarke 2006:27). The flexibility of the method, which allows for a wide range of analytic options, means that the potential range of things, that can be said about your data is broad, which is an advantage but conversely can be a disadvantage in that it makes developing specific guidelines for higher-phase analysis difficult, and can be potentially paralyzing when trying to decide what aspects of data to focus on.

In doing analysis, the researcher used thematic analysis for this study. According to Braun and Clarke (2006:6), thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data. It organizes and describes all data in rich detail. The six steps outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006:16) will be used as a guideline.

The steps are as follows:

- ***Familiarisation with the data***

This step required the researcher to be wholly immersed and actively in tune with the collected data by firstly transcribing the interactions and then reading (and re-reading) the transcripts and listening to the recordings. Initial ideas were observed. It was important that the researcher, had a holistic perception of the content of the interaction and had familiarised themselves with all aspects of the data. This first step laid the foundation for the subsequent analysis.

- ***Generating initial codes***

Once acquainted with the data, the researcher then began identifying preliminary codes, which are the elements of the data that stand out as interesting and meaningful. These codes are more numerous and detailed than themes, but provide a reference of the context of the data.

- ***Searching for themes***

After all data had been initially coded and collated, this phase required sorting the different codes into possible themes, and collating all the appropriate coded data extracts within the identified themes. Essentially, the researcher began to analyse the codes, and thereafter consider how different codes could combine to arrange an over-arching theme. The

researcher used visual representations to help depict the different codes into themes. The name of each code (and a brief description) on a separate piece of paper was recorded, and categorised into theme-piles. A few initial codes went on to form main themes, some others had formed sub-themes, while yet others were discarded.

- ***Reviewing themes***

At this point, themes were evaluated to determine validity and relevance. Themes that could not be utilised effectively were discarded, and common themes were bundled. During this initiative it was discovered that analysis is not solely a sequential progression but rather a cyclical process. In other words, during analysis the researcher did not merely advance from one phase to the next, but rather moved back and forth throughout the phases (Braun and Clarke 2006:15). Data within themes should tie in together neatly, while there should be clear and identifiable differentiations between themes.

- Phase 1, is where the themes were checked for coherent patterns;
- Phase 2, for the overall data set.

- ***Defining and naming themes***

This step involved fine-tuning and defining the themes and potential subthemes within the data. Dynamic analysis is required to further enhance the identified themes. The researcher provided theme names and clear working definitions that captured the essence of each theme in a concise manner.

- ***Producing the report***

Ultimately, the researcher articulated their analysis into an understandable body of work, by engaging intense and compelling extract examples that identify with the themes, research questions, and literature. This went beyond a simple description of the themes and portrayed an analysis reinforced with empirical evidence that addressed the research questions.

3.9 TRUSTWORTHINESS

The most common four criteria that are deployed to verify trustworthiness of data are credibility, dependability, transferability and conformability. For the purpose of this study, Guba's model (Lincoln and Guba 1985:112) for determining trustworthiness of qualitative research was employed as it has a strong conceptual construction and has also been widely implemented in qualitative research.

3.9.1 Credibility

Credibility in research can be identified as the ability of collected data to meet the specified outcomes in a manner that is consistent, accurate and free from bias. Research findings should be corroborated in terms of matching the content to hypothesised findings; this then justifies the validity of the prescribed research methods. Analysis of the data (recordings, notes and transcripts) was conducted methodically to display clear associations between the data and interpretations, which proved congruent. The use and reference of the exact responses of participants project some of the variety and context of the collected responses. The credibility of the research was further enhanced by the member checks, along with the presence and academic assistance of the co-supervisor during the interviews that were conducted.

3.9.2 Conformability

Conformability refers to presenting data or research findings in a way that is representative of the participant's opinions, and is not prone to researcher partiality or influence that distorts the findings. Transcripts and excerpts were evaluated in line with the objective of establishing themes were broadly consistent, yet individually expressed.

3.9.3 Dependability

The ability of the research to conform to external validation by another researcher under similar conditions or specified criteria. The research was conducted in a systematic, logical manner consistent with external or accepted methods of data collection and analysis

3.9.4 Transferability

Transferability is the capacity of the collected data to be applicable in other contexts or studies whereby other participants could theoretically express views or opinions congruent or analogous to the documented research findings. The data collected was rich in content and was enhanced by conducting detailed interpretations of data, which lead to exhaustive descriptions in a purposeful and relatable presentation that could be transposed to comparable scenarios.

3.9.5 Authenticity

Authenticity refers to genuine expressions of emotion that are unadulterated or unpretentious in scope. Research findings must be faithfully and comprehensively described as a part of participants' recollections. It also focuses on contextual value and identifies intrinsic meaning of responses. This was accomplished as a sufficient amount of data was collected and the verbatim excerpts of the participants' were captured.

3.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics are defined as observing morally and legally accepted behaviour when conducting research. According to Dantzker and Hunter (2006:20) this necessitates the researcher to be fully aware regarding all research activities, while also upholding honesty and intellectuality in approach and reporting and to bear in mind the repercussions. If any, the researcher should be sure that the intended research outcome outweighs any consequent negativity as far as possible.

The participants were given a letter of information (Appendix 1 and 2) that outlined:

- 1) the aim of the research;
- 2) the research approach and data collection and analysis;
- 3) what participation involves and;
- 4) how the data will be used and presented.

The document stated that the participants could voluntarily leave the study at any stage in the research process. Participants had to sign consent forms (Appendix 3 and 5) before the research could commence. The participants were given a copy of the interview schedule beforehand so as to more thoroughly prepare their answers. In working with the data

collected, each participant was given a code and the data was thereafter associated with the code and not with participants' names.

Due regard was observed to ensure that the identity of each participant was concealed not revealed and would be anonymous in the final report.

All ethical procedures as required by the ethics committee of Durban University of Technology were adhered to.

3.10.1 Non-malificence

Creswell and Miller (2000:125) refer to non-malificence as the reduction of danger to humans. All participants were assured of optional voluntary withdrawal at any time from the research study. Care was taken for no harm or physical discomfort to be caused to them during the study.

3.10.2 The principle of informed consent

Participants were thoroughly informed of all aspects of the research that could prejudice their intention to be involved in the research. The researcher ensured that all participants sign an informed consent form and were comfortable throughout with participating in the research. The information obtained was kept safe by the researcher.

3.10.3 Deception

Deception arises from false information provided to participants by the researcher, or generates intentional misdirection or misrepresentation on an important component of the research that then forces participation. This must be avoided, and it is necessary for the researcher to be honest and give the participants complete and accurate information regarding the investigation. In this study, all relevant information was communicated to the participants in the study.

3.10.4 Respect for persons/autonomy

The researcher acknowledged the participant's right to free will, personal perspectives, and that certain individual values and beliefs would determine specific actions.

3.11 LIMITATIONS

Limitations refer to constraints or restrictions regarding the application of this study to the generalisation among the wider population. In this instance, the study was conducted among academics and students from one institution that worked with tribes in a specific geographic area in India, as a consequence of purposeful sampling. The results of this research cannot then be extrapolated to indicate a common or similar outcome with regards to tribes in different geographic areas, namely South Africa, or slightly divergent ethnicities.

Furthermore, there was a language barrier due to many of the participants not having English as a primary language. This required translation to be used during the focus group interviews. These limitations however did not hamper the effectiveness of the study as data was collected to saturation point and can be utilised in the general context of this study.

3.12 CONCLUSION

This chapter began with an introduction. It described the research design employed in this study, data collection and analysis procedures. Trustworthiness was then discussed and lastly, the ethical considerations for the study were highlighted. Chapter 4 presents the research findings together with relevant literature.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter of the research depicts the analysis and interpretation of the data gathered. The main purpose of the study was to explore the core values and processes that guided community engagement within tribal communities. This study was conducted in collaboration with the University of Mumbai, based in Jambhulpada, a rural area outside the University of Mumbai. The study endeavoured to investigate the university process of engaging with tribal communities, understanding how community based teaching and learning occurs in tribal communities and the spiritual beliefs and practices of tribal communities in India. Rich descriptive data was collected using semi structured interviews and focus group discussions. Both sets of data collected were analysed through a process of thematic analysis and coding. The data in this chapter is presented according to themes and sub-themes in conjunction with an analysis thereof.

4.2 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE OBJECTIVES AND THE DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

The objectives and data collection tools used for this study are presented in Table 4.2.1.

Table 4.2.1: Objectives and data collection process.

Objectives	Data collection process
1. To understand how tribal communities are conceptualised in rural India.	Academics a. 6 interviews (6 academics) Students b. 1 focus group discussion (23 students)
2. To explore the university process of engaging with tribal communities.	Academics a. 6 interviews (6 academics)

3. To understand the spiritual beliefs and practices of tribal communities in India.	Students a. 1 focus group discussion (23 students)
4. To understand how community based teaching and learning occurs in tribal communities.	Students a. 1 focus group discussion (23 students)

4.3. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES

The demographic profiles of the study participants are provided in Table 4.3.1 below.

Table 4.3.1: Demographic profile of participants

Participants	Number of interviews	Number of focus group discussions	Department/ level
Academics	6	-	Social work Department
Students	-	1	Social work students- Masters students

4.4 THE PROCESS OF DATA ANALYSIS

The interviews and focus groups were audio recorded, using a tape recorder. Each audio recording was then transcribed. The transcripts were subsequently read, several times by the researcher to familiarise herself with the data. The researcher then generated codes which entailed creating labels for the data that appeared interesting, meaningful, and also relevant to the research questions. During this process the list of various themes and sub-themes emerged. The data was analysed using thematic analysis. The themes were collated according to their similarities, and common or recurring themes were identified for the purpose of clarification in relation to the theoretical framework created in the literature review. These findings are documented in Table 4.5.1. below.

4.5 DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The following section presents the findings. The data has been grouped into 3 main themes, and 12 sub-themes were identified from the responses of the participants. These are presented in Table 4.5.1 below.

Table 4.5.1: Themes and sub – themes derived from the data

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
1. Tribal context	1.1. Characteristics of tribal communities. 1.2. Tribal spirituality 1.3. Indigenous healing methodology
2. Challenges facing tribal communities	2.1. Lack of resources and poor infrastructure 2.2. Psycho-social issues 2.3. Cultural factors 2.4. Migration 2.5. Social political challenges
3. Preparedness to engage	3.1. Role of social work academics 3.2. Class based preparedness 3.3. Process of engagement 3.4. Community based teaching and learning

THEME 1: TRIBAL CONTEXT

The first theme was extracted from the analysis within a tribal context. Three further sub-themes which are documented below were distilled from this theme.

Sub-themes:

1.1 Characteristics of tribal communities

The first sub-theme refers to the characteristics of tribal communities. The responses of students are recorded below.

Student excerpts:

“The base of the community basically is the culture, their traditions and the people and the specific area. So we have to keep intact the community and develop it in a way that doesn't affect them in a negative way, in a positive way.”

“They have a long history of culture.”

“They have the different, own culture.”

“It is the real citizen of that land.”

“The indigenous people who have actually owned that land.”

“It's actually joint ownership of the land.”

“They live in the forest they think that the forest is the whole of their Mother Earth...mother nature...gift of mother nature. So they don't like to own that one place. They are living in one community, they own the land, they have communism... no division of land.”

“They are the worshipers of nature.”

“They are totally dependent on the forests.”

“Tribal communities don't have lots of resources. No basic resources.”

“One way of defining them is under the Indian constitution there is... people have been defined according to their caste within that there are a group of people who are being called scheduled in the tribes who have been demarcated officially as scheduled tribes.”

“They are considered to be very primitive tribals...they have the basic things to clothe themselves but they are marginalised in terms of food, health.”

“ In this context this is the village you have to walk a little down, some kilometres and then we reach their hamlets, their small small hamlets of each tribal community and they are not even aware of what happens .”

“When you say tribal community, it is always the area where exclusively the tribals are staying, they are on hill tops, inaccessible area and away from the main village”.

“If you look at the human development index, tribals are the most vulnerable.”

“If you take any official document you will realise that the tribals are at a lower level.”

“The urban areas even now you'll see gender differences but in the tribal villages it's not like that both are in the equal position neither is up nor the other one is down, both are in equal position.”

“It is just a myth, in our Indian culture... women....the wife goes backwards and husband is front. In katkari...in Tribal...wife comes first ...they give privilege to women first. Whatever she wants. She will do...she will decide what the family will work on.”

“We all know that this tribes are the poorest people in the country, they are living a life peacefully.”

“If you go there and look at the surroundings and the way the houses are situated, infrastructure in tribal village perspective it is that only conveys that these people are united.”

“So the village is just there’s this big road, not very big, it like a Kacha road, not a concrete road so there’s this kacha road and beside that road there are houses and they don’t have any locks or any doors or anything. So they’re just free in that way, so they are united, they trust each other in a way that we cannot trust each other.”

“There is a huge emphasis on family wellbeing amongst them.”

“Family preservation.”

“They stay together.”

“So basically a tribal community...pardy...is few people who have come and settled and who have a few houses...just 100 or 50 houses and they are out of the main community or main centre...that is divardy...and pardy...what we call is an ancient thing...they have sanctuaries they have developed. From there they went somewhere else to make their own thing.”

India is home to one of the largest tribal populations across the planet (Das and Bose 2015:48; Ramya *et al.* 2017:4462; Shrivastava, Shrivastava and Ramasamy 2013:60). According to Shivamuthy *et al.* (2017:130) and Reddy *et al.* (2017:1) a tribal population in India is regarded as autochthonous to the land. They tend to reside in geographical isolation, mainly in forest areas, which do not commonly coincide with mainstream society (Ramaya *et al.* 2017:4462; Purshottam and Dhingra 2017:1590; Purkayashta 2016:3; Bhirud 2014:1; Shrivastava, Shrivastava and Ramasamy 2013:60; Shama and Roy 2016:78; Reddy *et al.* 2017:1). Many of these tribes exhibit collective ownership of land and forest resources which facilitates an egalitarian and broadly unstructured social set-up and also results in a reinforced sense of solidarity. Alternatively there are also some tribes engaging in individual ownership of property which corresponds to civilized societal norms (Bhirud 2014:1). Forests have been home to these tribal communities for several generations, thus the forests are the core of the tribal economy (Ramaya *et al.* 2017:4462; Marchang 2017:68). From the perspective of civilized society, tribal communities are usually categorised as economically disadvantaged and comparatively less socially advanced

(Purkayashta 2016:7; Shrivastava, Shrivastava and Ramasamy 2013:6; Marchang 2017:68).

An interesting aspect to note is the shared or equal workload among both males and females in the village, specifically in farming and agriculture (Panwar, Mathur, Chand, Dhaka, Singh and Moxley 2014: 987; Kotiah 2017:6). This equality of status results in mixed or combined living arrangements for both males and females among extended family. The tribal individuals further possess a keen sense of affiliation with their immediate family, along with the wider community (Kapur 2018:8-9).

The traditionally accepted lifestyles have been predominantly self-sustaining and display multiple divergences from mainstream culture (Ramya *et al.* 2017:4462; Pati and Dash 2002:490). The longevity of social and cultural life of tribals can be attributed to factors such as an enhanced degree of solidarity, greater respect for traditions and customs, emphasising meanings relating to social actions, a devaluated significance of money and a prominent sense of camaraderie which is still prevalent amongst the community members (Sehgal *et al.* 2018:44).

From the collated excerpts, a few elements appear to be dominant. Firstly, tribal communities appear to embrace their own unique spirituality. This spirituality is heavily influenced by nature and the respect for others in their ecosystem. Also what appears important is the strong relationship between families. Although they have a lack of resources and access to socially accepted concepts and traditions that could be perceived as a negative or of detriment in the civilised world, this does not seem to hinder the quality of tribal life as noted in the data.

1.2 Tribal spirituality

Tribal spirituality was the second sub-theme that emerged from the data. The excerpts below reflect the responses from academics.

Academic excerpts:

"They always pray to the nature as I know tribal communities they pray to the trees, they pray to animals, they have also some like if they constructed a well, they pray to that well also because that well gives them water, so they pray to the water also...these are their spiritual consensus."

"They really revere nature as their God, can you tell me more of what you have observed of this spirituality of theirs."

"They believe in nature. It is called animism. So for them tree is to be worship, they never worship Ganesha or Muruga."

"I had mentioned in the lecture today in the morning, as I mentioned that an entire Hill is considered to be their God."

"These tribal believe in nature worship they believe that the God of Green, Hira Dev that's what they call him. That's their God, that basically the nature, the trees, the forest, that provide them with the basic amenities that they want. That is their God."

"Katkarwadi, so they have this particular song based on their worship and their belief on the Green God, so they practice these particular beliefs in the folk dances, folk songs, folklore's so that's how we know that this is their base of belief, that this is the God that they believe in, they don't believe in worshipping idols and everything they just believe in practicing worship to the God."

"They take nature as their God, private provider... because preservation of the forest and nature is important for the future generation of them. So they have been pushing themselves to preserve, to plant more and more trees by engaging different different Departments of the government so that they can earn income from that and plus nature will be sustained and so on."

"Ganpathi Pooja, even in my house we keep Ganapati idol. It was never a part of the tribals, but now every tribal village almost they will keep that murthi, which is not part of them."

"They do individual prayers these people like in their family, in their homes?"

“They do not have the name of the God... they just call it a Devi...that is a Ram Devi they call it....it differs from other Gods also. Like you say Lakshmi and Saraswati is defined...like Saraswati is for knowledge and Lakshmi is for money...but over there Ram Devi is for everything... she protects from everything .Ram Devi is for a particular village.”

“Morality play the very important role in the tribal culture,...there is a lot to learn from the tribal culture.”

“The belief, superstitious beliefs...because these tribal people believe on superstition a lot.”

“They will go and worship a tree and they will light diya and all that.”

“So it passes down. Continues through like oral, there's nothing written as such.”

“It's not written, it's not recorded anywhere but still people remember all songs, each and every piece of that song. Each song has a meaning. Different meanings related to the present context and the previous context considering the nature and the issues that they are facing. Every song has a specific issue.”

“Have individual prayers of such but the community makes a song in their own language which has been used.”

“There are songs on social issues, the community. They have their unique songs.”

“For every problem they face and for every joyous occasion as well they have this song.”

“They use a drum.”

“Local instrument whatever they get...”

“They use sticks and beat on that and they also make noise.”

“They celebrate. They have a particular dance form, they do a dance on that day. Particular dance for a particular ritual.”

“This tradition is coming from the ancient people, so they are not understanding why they are doing... they just following.”

“So as generation to generation, so we pray to the God for our ancestors have prayed. So according to that they follow.”

“There is what you call totemism that exist there.”

“Even they worship animals such as tiger.”

“They made a certain point in the forest where they have put a stone on the name of a tiger, on the occasions of Diwali the festival of India or their festival, they have certain festivals so they provide, they keep a food over there as an offering to the God or the tiger, so that's how they practice.”

Diverse religious processes have been embraced by the tribal community among which include worship of nature, animism, and ancestor worship, with a common thread being religiosity culture (Tripathi 2016:1; Chatterjee and Sharma 2018:1; Kapur 2018:8; Pandikattu 2017:4). They also possess profound faith that deities and supernatural power reside within natural phenomena such as forests, mountains and aquatic bodies like rivers, ponds or streams (Chatterjee and Sharma 2018:1). In several rural areas of India, many plants and animals are regarded as pious and sacred, which aids in distributing cultural values among the tribal communities (Kandari *et al.* 2014:3). By incorporating the practice of nature worship and maintaining confidence in the mystical nature of terrestrial phenomena, tribals promote and encourage happiness while simultaneously upholding the cultural conviction of warding off evils (Chatterjee and Sharma 2018:1; Seghal *et al.* 2018:38).

As evidenced in the excerpts a common practice of Indian tribals throughout the year is participation in various religious events, which help to bring about social camaraderie, communal solidarity and conformity in their society (Chatterjee and Sharma 2018:1). Music and dance are regarded as an integral aspect of tribal life (Pati and Dash 2002:490; Purshottam and Dhingra 2017:1593). The bulk of celebrations are accompanied by dance, music, and the playing of various musical instruments (Pandikattu 2017:6; Chatterjee and Sharma 2018:4). Some tribal culture rituals are organized in such a way that celebrations takes roughly twenty four hours. The night is spent in communal rhythmic movements such as drumming, dancing, and singing which can often lead the participants to a crowd catharsis (Pandikattu 2017:6). Important characteristics and functions of traditional folklore have been conveyed for generations in the forms of oral narratives, songs, and music. Purshottam and Dhingra (2017:1593) emphasized that the inclusion of indigenous culture, folklore and history in educational curricula can assist in building confidence of tribal children and catalyse the relevance of education in their lives. Therefore, music and dance

performances should be actively encouraged, which could in turn vicariously aid in boosting the literacy rates of tribes of India.

Plants and animals are mainly considered as manifestations of divine energy. The tribal cultures additionally give more prominence to earth bound creatures such as serpents, tigers, rodents etc. (Pandikattu 2017:4). In essence, this can be regarded as a form of totemism which is commonly practiced among tribal communities in India (Amirthalingum 2014:23). Totemism can be described as “a complex of varied ideas and ways of behaviour based on a world view drawn from nature” (Dagba *et al.* 2013:145).

Partly as a result of population growth and increased exposure over an extended timespan, modern tribal communities have been influenced to a certain extent by mainstream Hindu culture which has resulted in a portmanteau of beliefs (Pandikattu 2017:2; Chatterjee and Sharma 2018:1). This is evident in the worship and acknowledgment of established Hindu deities like Kali Mata and Durga Mata along with other gods and goddesses (Pandikattu 2017:2). Hence some homes now have these idols.

1.3 Indigenous Healing methodologies

The third and final sub-theme derived from the data under the theme tribal context is indigenous healing methodologies. The responses presented by students are as follows:

Student excerpts:

“Tribal people have rich knowledge, what we call indigenous know knowledge of plants.”

“The people who had some kind of understanding of medicine became traditional healers because the village is self-sufficient...they don't have to rely on others.”

“They have their own way of healing themselves. In every place there is one person who is, has a very good understanding of the nature, take ayurvedic medicines from the forest, make a tablet of that, herbs.”

“Even there is a health problem people are not aware of, they are not aware about how to cure a disease means still they uses the old traditional ayurvedic medicines to cure themselves. Most of them are frightened to visit a doctor because they might, because of something or other issues.”

“That is with regard to physical ailments.”

“He consult with the rest of the village then so if they get sick the people go to him, is he called a Vaidya.”

“He don't share the formula with anyone even not with his family.”

“It is indigenous knowledge that he has gained but he doesn't share that with the family or other people of the village.”

“Whatever we have gone through these past two days we seen a person over here who cures snake bites but by doing some spiritual work like sprinkling water on that affected person, the person get healed ...so most people who have problems by snake biting they come to him and they are good now we also.”

“Music is part of the healing process.”

“In music therapy it has been accepted that music plays an important role because it can have an impact on your behaviour.”

Indigenous knowledge systems are defined as “the sum total of the knowledge and skills which people in a particular geographic area possess, and which enables them to get the most of the natural environment” (Grenier 1998 cited in Hoppers 2017:2). Healthcare and medicinal treatment has been historically treated naturally by the use of various plants and natural remedies, specifically by traditional healers in lieu of medical professionals (Kapur 2018:9; Mahant 2015:51). Tribal members have acquired profound knowledge developed through a significant awareness of their local environments and detailed ecological processes that have been transmitted through the passage of time (Dwivedi 2015:45; Mahant 2015:51-52; Aadhan and Anand 2018:2110).

Thus, they possess distinctive knowledge on the usage of assorted plant parts in the cure of ailments, and have evolved into experts in using different formulations containing plant parts to cure ailments as a type of primary health care. This is a component of their cultural practices and creates the ability for sustaining health and preventing diseases among them (Dwivedi 2015:45; Mahant 2015:51-52; Aadhan and Anand 2018:2110). Unfortunately the knowledge and understanding of medicinal properties and remedies is still mostly in the hands of the healers, who by and large are elderly members of the

community, potentially exacerbating the risk of such practices not continuing into the future (Mahant 2015:51; Aziz *et al.* 2018:13).

THEME 2: CHALLENGES FACING TRIBAL COMMUNITIES

The second major theme derived from the data reflected the challenges facing tribal community. Five sub-themes emerged from this data. These sub-themes are presented below. The excerpts below reflect the responses of the participants.

Sub-themes

2.1 Lack of resources and poor infrastructure

The first sub-theme derived from the data was the lack of resources and poor infrastructure.

Academic excerpts:

“Health, water, livelihood and infrastructure...lack of infrastructure. These are the basic challenges.”

“Students come from an urban set up you say one thing you take a rickshaw and you go somewhere but here we walk. it maybe 2km, 3km but we walking and it’s something you have to get used to it, it is initially a struggle.”

“There is no public transport inside the community.”

Student excerpts:

“Because as a citizen....we think we have a lot of problems....but after seeing them ...because they don’t have the basic necessities...they don’t have electricity and they don’t have water also. They don’t have food also. Daily food...then too they are living happily and peacefully...so why can’t we...so that is the quality what we have learnt from them.”

“The tribals are way beyond when it comes to ... because the condition of the Indian village are well developed while they are not in terms of infrastructure. Means when we compare Indian village to the tribal village, Indian village are a bit developed than tribal hamlet.”

“Sanitation...when I was in first year of fieldwork, we had done a small survey and we found out that there were no proper toilets.”

“Water and the unemployment.”

“What we have seen these past two days, the problem mainly is water. Whatever we go and tell them their first listen.... after that they will tell us this is our problem.”

“Water they're not getting basic water... they have to travel....down to the valley, for two pots of water they have to travel from the hill top down to go there.”

“Right now they are facing water issues, other things that can survive right now the only concentration is the water.”

“They have constructed a pipe to take the water from the downstairs to up... from the mountain Hill. We have to think other solutions for that... how we can modify the price of that the water can be passed from down to up.”

Some of the most prominent current issues facing tribal communities include the lack of fundamental resources such as running water, sanitation and healthcare facilities, and infrastructure in the form of roads and electricity (Chatterjee *et al.* 2003:57; Purshottam and Dhingra 2017:1588). Inferior infrastructural development when added to remote and isolated topography contributes to the hardships and difficulties regularly encountered by tribals (Singh and Negi 2019:31). Anjali (2013:12) further emphasized that the health status of a community relies on open access to requisite sustenance and nutrition, and proper sanitation facilities. A deficit of these elements could lead to the proliferation of disease and related health issues (Balgir 2004 cited in Sarkar 2016:15), and might also be one of the contributing factors to the marginalization of tribal communities by civilized society at large. Additionally, Purshottam and Dhingra (2017: 1594) theorise that a rudimentary lack of awareness is the key source of poor health and stagnation of tribes. Accordingly, awareness initiatives for sanitation, healthcare and hygiene, along with relevant information of government special programmes for tribes, should be endorsed and promoted.

The Government has accordingly begun addressing these issues by formulating a 5 year vision programme for development of scheduled communities (Purohit 2019:3), along with other previous endeavours intended for upliftment of tribal communities such as village self-sufficiency schemes, Integrated Sanitary Complex for Women, Clean Village Campaign and Rural Sanitation, Capital Programme of Infrastructure Development by Rural Local Bodies, Rejuvenation of Water Bodies and Rain Water Harvesting in Rural Areas (Prabha *et al.* 2016:96).

2.2 Psycho-social issues

The second sub-theme derived from the data was psycho-social issues. Excerpts from students are detailed as follows.

Student excerpts:

“They have a problem of illiteracy and because of that they don’t get employment opportunities in cities... they are just deprived of the facilities provided by the government, because of illiteracy some of the schemes launched by the government they don’t get aware... because of illiteracy.”

“Education.”

“Family planning, joint family... lack of education.”

“For one day they can have food...if the day is over then for next day ...they have to survive for that day food, so they are not like us they do not preserve their food, they do not have a structure for their living area... like land they do not own any land.”

“There must be a reason, because here men’s addicted to alcohol. So they can’t take a majority decision of the family, female take charge of the family. And he participates in everything... but they are loved together.”

“Alcoholism, there's a lot of alcoholism but that is their culture. Alcoholism is their culture. So they drink on a daily basis.”

The literacy scenario of tribals in India on average lags far behind the literacy rate of the general population of the country (Anbuselvi and Leeson 2015:206). Having made substantial progress in this field, the government nonetheless has a long way to go to reinforce their educational status as currently many tribes still fall short in matters of literacy and education (Sahu 2014:48). This absence of education even extends to family planning as awareness and understanding of the usage of contraceptives and the notion of family planning in general is virtually non-existent (Prusty 2014:354). Education is a vital component for the continual advancement of any developing nation and restriction of education is mainly responsible for the exploitation and pitiable predicament of the tribals (Awais *et al.* 2009:4). Education is also a significant gateway that can be applied to upgrading the economic and social status of impoverished tribal communities in society (Brahmanandam and Babu 2016: 81; Rajkumar 2019:17; Sahu 2014:48).

The consumption of alcohol is very prevalent among the various tribal communities. From a social and cultural point of view, alcohol binds the tribals together akin to a string of thread (Ho and Mishra 2017:1). Alcohol is consumed ritually on all sacramental occasions from birth to death (Ho and Mishra 2017:1; *Pati et al.* 2018:7; Sarkar 2016:17; Purshottam and Dhingra 2017:1592). Many of these populations in the lower strata of the Indian social system spend a substantial proportion of their earnings on liquor (Barik, Kumar, Rai, and Chowdhury 2015:221). A study undertaken by Ho and Mishra, 2017 concluded that regular alcohol consumption occurred frequently among the tribal population under study. Drinking behaviour and social problems were more pronounced in tribal groups; whereas incidents of 'drunkenness' were comparatively diminished among urban or civilised groups (Ho and Mishra 2017:5).

2.3 Cultural factors

The third sub-theme derived from the data was cultural factors.

Student excerpts:

"Language is the major barrier because many of them are not able to speak in Marathi, they are from different different, and I mean most of them are from Marathi background."

"Also tribal community has their different language so they don't even understand Marathi, the typical Marathi which is being used in the urban spaces so that is one of the major barrier."

“Many of our students in this batch 90% of students are from urban spaces so they don't even have rural touch like this village maybe called a rural village and tribals has their different setups, their different hamlets so in that case unless they don't see them, unless they don't reach them, unless they don't interact with them till that time they will not understand, I think theoretically they will not understand they have to go practically in the field and then only they can be able to understand their cultures.”

Tribal communities diverge from mainstream society in multiple ways, with the culture and religion being among the most conspicuous discrepancies. There remains a vast distance, both literally and culturally, between tribal communities and the secular population, which necessitates the need to be culturally sensitive and converse in the local language when providing services to tribal communities, for example in the delivery of healthcare (Contractor *et al.* 2018:8). This is acknowledged in the excerpts wherein students take cognisance of the chief barrier being the communication or language discrepancy, which therefore requires hands-on interaction with the community to resolve this. On a related note, Sachs and Clark (2017:87) prescribed that the interaction with community members who possess diverse cultural and linguistic frameworks results in more familiarity and relatability for graduates, which helps to mitigate development into morally upright global citizens that are holistically aware and responsible.

2.4 Migration

The fourth sub-theme derived from the data was migration.

Academic excerpts:

“They have to migrate because they don't get employed locally, so eight months they have to migrate.”

Student excerpts:

“They are migrated people, they live here for 6 months... then they go to another place for six months... so we are giving them knowledge for proper housing there is government policy.”

Distress seasonal migration is a growing phenomenon among tribal communities in India (Premsingh and Ebenezer 2013:1). Their socio-economic plight has resulted in seasonal migration seeking employment for roughly 4 to 8 months of the year, partly because of the

continuing widespread destruction of forests and the growth surge in tribal populations who are hence unable to subsist solely on forest resources (Premsingh and Ebenezer 2013:1; Purshottam and Dhingra 2017:1592; Sehgal, Nanda, Desmukh and Nusrat 2018:45). Major issues including seasonal drought (Smita 2008: vii), division and forfeiture of land due to acquisition, and unlawful land alienation by non-tribals are supplementary forces that compel tribal workers to migrate (Purshottam and Dhingra 2017:1592; Pandey 2017:61). Migration thus becomes the ultimate source of their sustenance (Roy, Singh and Roy 2015:20). The vast majority of the tribal population work as agricultural labourers. In search of jobs, these work seekers engage in seasonal migration to adjoining states (Chakravarthi and Lakshminarayana 2017:149), mainly absorbed in low-wage menial work primarily in industrial and agricultural sectors (Roy, Singh and Roy 2015:2). Social workers are integral catalysts to champion the cause of enforced tribal migration by assisting to facilitate various benefits provided by the government to tribal communities (Dhavaleshwar 2016:62).

2.5 Socio-political challenges

The fifth sub-theme derived from the data was socio-political challenges.

Academic excerpts:

“Indian communities are multicultural communities, so here there are different challenges, engage in the different communities, we have to identify cultures, their traditions and their power structures.”

“India has a rigid caste system, so in that case we also have to identify the power structures in the communities.”

“Forest belong to tribal people but after the government came into force, tribal became the intruders, now tribal have become intruders... they become a problem with the government of policy. Today growing food in the jungle in the forest is a problem, government doesn't allow.”

“To engage with them, we first have to understand the social political structures of the community, based on that we have to assess the needs of the community, so those who are underprivileged people.”

“Those who are backward community peoples their need are different than the other community people, like those who are upper in the social political structures.”

Student excerpts:

“Representation...where is their voice. They can only raise their issues if they are represented adequately, in parliament or state assemblies and it is not there.”

“There are exterior challenges forces, the political representatives of the community of the particular district, so those people interfere a lot when it comes to their political profits, benefits. They don't think about the tribal villages, they just think about how they want to develop themselves and they want go ahead. So that is one of the challenge.”

“One is when the government forms schemes for the tribal people, schemes or plans or anything the policies, the political party and the political representative don't let the schemes go through them to the tribal villages and in case they go they don't get implemented because these people misguide them about, they tell the tribal villages that this scheme is not good for you, it will destroy your village.”

Tribal communities also experience numerous socio-political issues, that are to a large degree compounded and aggravated by the marginalization of these communities by government authority figures as evidenced by the excerpts above. Tribal community members by and large have a reduced impact on the appropriate platforms that their issues need to be canvassed on, as even when such challenges are addressed or noted, minimal opportunities for discussion are afforded to them. This contributes to tribals being classified as disadvantaged sections of society (Sahoo 2017:1). Service learning can help to reduce the aforementioned ostracisation, as it is believed to assist students to learn about political institutions and democratic politics. This subsequently engenders positive civic attitudes and intensifies student's involvement with their communities in particular and political participation in general (Burth 2016:59).

This concept was explored in a survey conducted by Tyagi and Sinha (2001 cited in Pattanaik *et al.* 2018:18) which found that, despite the numerical representation of tribal members on a Panchayati/tribal council, limited tangible positive output was effected, somewhat as a consequence of low literacy levels. This hindered the ability of tribal

members to communicate their views effectively, and the emphasis on actual livelihood activities dominated proceedings therefore limiting the potential socio-economic influence that they could wield. These are therefore marginalized communities and provide rich spaces with in which students can interpret engagement.

According to Ramaiah (2014:78), an effective method of empowering tribal communities would be by equipping them with sufficient legal and political support. They would consequently possess the relevant knowledge and skills, and most of all the courage to utilize these enhancements for positive revolution. Development programmes aimed at uplifting the circumstances of tribal communities can only be effective when the unique socio-political setting for each tribe, is considered and incorporated into the design of such initiatives, as opposed to generalizing and banding together diverse groups solely because of the generic nomenclature (Varte and Neitham 2013:50; Verma and Singh 2015:15). Students from the Department of Social Work assisted in empowering the local community by conducting medical checkups, which helped to both solve existing health issues and generate awareness to possibly prevent future medical concerns, and also aided in a legal sense by preventing exploitation of illiterate tribals by unscrupulous individuals who attempted to swindle them out of land or property, as an example.

THEME 3: PREPAREDNESS TO ENGAGE

The third and final theme derived from the data was preparedness to engage. There are four sub-themes presented below. The excerpts below reflect the responses of the participants.

Sub-themes

The first sub-theme derived from the data was the role of social work academics.

3.1 Role of social work academics

Academics excerpts:

“Teacher has to be a friend, philosopher and guide.”

“There are several spaces of development that one has to utilise, so a teachers role is basically make the students understand the communities.”

“Teachers role is taking students to the community, introducing them, using rapport building, using contacts from there till whenever there are problems for the students in the community because it is not a normal community, so they will come with a lot of questions.”

“As leader you should look at what impact you can make and impacts are not only made by just going and doing home visits and all that, it happens with simple things.”

“You have to do a very close monitoring of students in the tribal area, there is a lot of cases where non-tribal people abuse the tribal people. So we give students a brief understanding initially.”

“And all courses are practical orientated, if you are talking about the group work or case work or community organization, when we teach them say for example in my class I teach how to do community mapping that is one technique we use. So it is both ways theory to practice and practice to theory.”

Student excerpts:

“This is what it is...so linking the theory is the task of the teacher.”

“An orientation visit is organised. We do a transact walk, where students are given a guided tour of the place and then there is an interaction with various stakeholders...stakeholder analysis and community mapping. Then there is a needs assessment ...priority of needs.”

As reflected in the data, academics prepare students for the engagement process. In this instance, it was the social work academics that fulfil numerous roles, which include providing guidance to undergraduates, and demonstrating vital skills and abilities when dealing with students and other relevant parties (Verma 2015:38). Structured dialogue and impactful communication in the academic setting act as catalysts that assist in stimulating critical thinking and discrimination among students (Larrison and Korr 2013:202).

The educator, therefore, is not solely liable for content and direction in the academic setting, but also on how they portray themselves as role models in regular interactions with students, and how they are validating commitment towards social justice and other core values of the social work profession. This manifests in social work academics proactively engendering change in society (Verma 2015:42). Along these lines, the focus of educators has to be on learning through both fieldwork, as well as interactions within the classroom.

The actual impact and legacy of social workers with regards to the communities they interact with and serve is most times potentially minimised or neglected due to the myriad complex challenges faced by the tribal folk that undermine the impact of these initiatives. Nonetheless, these undertakings articulate a few of the key elements of the primary roles that social workers perform. As detailed in the last excerpt, some of the traditional activities indulged in include formulating the communication link or bridge between the students and the communities, identifying as reference personas whom community members can engage with openly and trustingly, and determining what necessities are required and the associated hierarchy thereof. A valuable resource utilized by social work academics is community mapping, fundamentally classified as a sequence of documenting the physical circumstances along with natural and constructed resources of the community, that provides impetus for the eventual benefit to the community (Archer, Luansang and Boonmahathanakorn 2012:121). In addition, according to Omer (2017:1) activities co-ordinated by academics such as a transact walk or community mapping, tend to be impactful tools that consolidate multiple perspectives and expedite objective dissection of problems and challenges that the community encounters. These provide important pathways that academics can consider when preparing students to engage. Summarily, according to Groccia and Buskist (2018:73), academic staff can prepare students for effective community engagement by encouraging them to focus on interacting with the community in an open minded and unbiased manner, as this approach yields the most fruitful results, essentially facilitating greater learning and more relevant contributions.

3.2 Class based preparedness

The second sub-theme derived from the data was class based preparedness.

Academic excerpts:

“Academically we have prepared them in terms of telling them the theoretical basis and understanding the caste structure, the caste dynamics including class, whatever are the different stakeholder dynamics.”

“We try to give them that theoretical background and a little before, we also orient them to the place that we are coming to, the nature of the society.”

“Our classes all our courses are so interactive that whenever we are talking about theory we always talk about whether they are coming across a situation, what is it that they have seen, a lot of discussion goes on or about caste system here.”

“When we talk about caste system it is the students who are talking more than the teacher and then they would narrate their experiences, how they have come across such situations in their own life because of the caste that they had difficulties and all that. So very much it is recollection, the reflection from practice to theory.”

“I find that the social work students are the one because one thing is they are very sensitive towards the issues because we are sensitising them probably the first semester has gone in making them first understand what is the reality of society.”

“So they become more sensitive, they are very close to the reality so they understand and that’s the reason, once you have this you know sensitivity then you have realisation it is very easy.”

“The notions of social justice, advocacy and empowerment, it is not reconditioned placement, it is part of curriculum.”

“Students are very prepared before the actual immersion and regarding the issue of justice and all that.”

“What we do is that we ask students that...Okay give them extra reading. Get them to go and find out the information.”

“They are supposed to be reading one policy related to the community and interrogating it.”

“We are conducting a session called PRA, Participatory rural appraisal, so today students have taken transact work in the fields, communities and tomorrow they will implement that in the where ever they are staying. So that is like theory in the field.”

“You must have like a case story of every village, trying to understand what are things that communities, what problems, so when you do community profiling you will understand what are the lack or weaknesses of the community.”

“You do a small comprehensive study, just to understand their social economic conditions, and their aspirations and the needs in the community.”

In order to acquaint themselves sufficiently prior to engagement with the community, the students first familiarized themselves with a brief background analysis of the local tribal community, including such elements as caste implications, overview of the economic burdens of the community, and other circumstances like any particular shortfalls, whether physical or intellectual. As articulated in the excerpts above, students need to understand the theoretical aspects and guidelines from a curriculum perspective prior to interacting with the community, both as a means to completely fulfil their academic objectives and simultaneously to be able to perceive and adjudge circumstances and situations by enhancing their insight and empathy towards tribal communities (Einfield and Collins 2008:104).

Since the social work curriculum is founded on the combination of theory and practice, comprehensive theory provision is essential, as is fieldwork experience. It is paramount for social work students to acquire, in a classroom setting, practice ideologies, values and ethics and the scientific origin for practice (Papouli 2014:1). Equally important is the ability to implement the theoretical concepts covered in the institution, to real world situations as part of a student's preparation to become a professional social worker (Dhemba 2012:2-3). This then imbues a deeper sensitivity in the students towards the context for engagement.

Hurtado (2007:191) inferred that one of the vital objectives of higher education should be inspiring students to cultivate a sense of social justice and become responsible citizens. In addition, Mitchell's (2014:1) qualitative study established that service learning experiences promoted reflection on experience identity when communicating with others, wherein emphasis on structural conditions that underpin social apprehensions reinforced students in sense-making and solidified their commitment to justice (Soria and Mitchell 2016:242). Learning about advocacy echoes social work values in promoting equality, social justice and social inclusion (Lee 2007:7; Dalrymple and Boylan 2013:2). Exposure to these concepts initially in an academic setting is beneficial to theoretical advocacy, as this would propagate social justice and empowerment.

Another tool utilized for preparedness is PRA, or participatory rural appraisal, which is a flexible, cost effective and efficient methodology that facilitates the gathering and analyzing of information by social workers in the context of multiple chronological

scenarios, subsequently aiding to comprehend the rural populace and the conditions that prevail in rural areas. This in turn would provide a thorough and inclusive framework regarding issues, potentials, resources and solutions to formulate realistic development practitioners to achieve their intended objectives within a predetermined timeframe (Chambers 1992 cited in Chandra 2010:289).

Furthermore, as mentioned in the excerpts, community profiling is a vital step in community organizing and development. Challenges and issues that are plaguing tribal communities can be better tackled and overcome by researchers relating to the specific merits of these problems in the form of community profiling. Additionally, it uncovers the current shape or state of the community such as the history, community issues, economic conditions, lifestyle and other trends and pattern (Manalili, 2012 cited in Bautista *et al.* 2016:113).

3.3 Process of engagement

The third sub-theme derived from the data was the process of engagement.

Academic excerpts:

“Two students placed here for the field work. They remain here, they stay with the communities. They take up the issues which they feel are very very important.”

“Two students are allocated for the entire area.”

“So three villages these students go together ...sometimes if required one person goes to one village and the other to another village, that is possible, but together they are taking up the responsibilities.”

“Finding out the problems of people and then linking them up with the government schemes. Some people do not have citizenship documents. Helping them to take up that. Or maybe somebody is trying to grab their land...so we are there to make sure they are not cheated. These are poor people.”

“They have a traditional leader called Nayke, but now what is happening because a formal system has emerged here in India, so you will find that the traditional leadership that was there and playing a very dominant role is now confined to dispute relation at the village.”

Student excerpts:

“Rapport building, it takes 6 or 7 months to build a rapport with the villagers.”

“Self-determination, empowering them to stand up for themselves, guiding them in a proper way and creating awareness and providing them with the necessary resources but not making them handicapped, giving them the proper resources and asking them to develop themselves.”

“Interacting with these peoples, we don't know what is... how to interact with them in a way that it's not offensive or they won't feel excluded from us so right now we are a group that has come from outside for their development, so we have to be in such a way that we feel like a part of the community so we still don't know how to mingle with them in that sorts so we still have to learn that.”

Allotey *et al.* (2019:67) stated that the purpose of community engagement is to “establish a collaborative relationship toward the achievement of a common goal. Ideally, in the process, communities become increasingly empowered, gain a shared sense of ownership of the agenda, and assume joint accountability.” The broad spectrum of community engagement varies greatly, ranging from simple engagement methods such as personal consultation to high-level strategies like empowerment (Doherty and Beaton, 2000:151; Lenihan 2009:11). This was evident in the student and academic excerpts in terms of the data.

Furthermore, as per Cavaye (2004:3), community engagement is categorised as "mutual communication and deliberation that occurs between government and citizens that allows citizens and government to participate mutually in the formulation of policy and the provision of government services". Social work students manifest the spirit of this definition, in the assistance of facilitation and upliftment of the community by providing support when interacting with government schemes, and intervening to halt the exploitation of these mostly uneducated community members, which is accomplished by standing as an invested party. Traditional leadership in rural India has historically been built upon attributes such as position in local caste hierarchy, wealth, unique land ownership, reputation, and influence outside the village (Dutta 2009:50). However, this template of leadership is evolving drastically, partly in response to major economic development plans that have adjusted orthodox perceptions and attitudes (Nagpaul 1990 cited in Dutta 2009:36).

The process of rapport building during engagement is arduous and time-consuming (Abbe and Brandon 2014:679), yet ultimately fruitful as constructive and progressive relationships

between social workers and tribals are generated, that in turn enhance trust and shared respect which result in greater impactful communication (Youell and Youell 2011:88). This was evidenced by the students admitting the challenges of building rapport effectively and simultaneously acknowledging the importance of doing so effectively.

Another integral component of social work is self-determination (Banks 2012:61), as it caters for the autonomy and independence of communities to make their own decisions (Furlong 2003:181). Community members tend to be more receptive towards the processes like self-determination when they feel personally involved with the issue being propagated, and can relevantly contribute to attainment of beneficial outcomes (Centre for Disease Control 2011 cited in Schlake 2015:1).

As apparent in the excerpts, genuine assimilation within the community can prove to be effective and crucial to tangible change. Students formulate a clearer intuition into problem solving as they consider various approaches and perspectives, which may not have been apparent from a purely theoretical level. Spending more time with the tribal folk additionally helps in rapport building and strengthening the relationships and indeed reciprocal friendship and warmth, all of which assist tremendously in upliftment and overcoming challenges in the form of advocacy. The University of Mumbai employs such techniques and methods such as advocacy, empowerment, rapport building, and self-determination in the process of community engagement.

3.4 Community based teaching and learning

The fourth and final sub-theme under the theme preparedness to engage, was community based teaching and learning.

Academic excerpts:

"We had a sharing with the students to understand how has this visit enriched their experience, so it was nice to hear them say that, we've always been hearing tribal community, so this is the first time experience and they say for the first time now we understand when you say a tribal community what it means."

"I think they have understood what the community is, understanding community has been... understanding their culture, their traditions, their marginality, their exclusion all this has been identified."

“We didn't know this when that you talk about marginalization this is how they are marginalised geographically, they marginalised, economically, politically, marginalisation in all aspects”.

“They are exposed to reality at a grassroots level.”

“Students learn reality, it is very different from what they have expected and they learn culture. They also learn what are the problems that the tribals are facing, they understand the systematic problems in the government.”

“They learn a lot of indigenous knowledge, wisdom, practices, values which is much more than the book.”

“If you look at our syllabus for the first semester one paper is on understanding introduction to social work.”

“The way they live, like the way they look at their life, the way they look at the philosophy of life ...all these thing there is nowhere in the book.”

“They doing us a favour by allowing us to engage with them because our learning is increased because of them if they're not there, there is no learning.”

“Once you are learning about all these aspect theoretically in the classroom you are able to practically see how the culture of tribals is different that the non-tribal people or the urban people.”

“We are also looking at how our values are formed, our norms are formed.”

Student excerpts:

“You get the knowledge as a social worker what I feel is knowledge is not just that you visit two days and get the knowledge. It is a lifetime process...you learn everyday ...you get to know new new thing because that is a creative thing...each and every time what you do..... That is different from every other thing what you have done so knowledge is not limited I feel each and every experience gives you a new knowledge and that adds to your knowledge.”

From the above excerpts, it was apparent that the impact and influence of learning within a community space on undergraduate students in a tribal environment cannot be overstated. Firsthand exposure to and immersion in tribal culture, daily life experiences, and overall behaviour imprints on students such that they relate on a humanitarian level to the community and motivates them further to resolve ongoing issues through empathy and genuine concern, rather than merely as part of their curriculum requirements, which conveniently also gets accomplished. This is validated by Furco (2010:381), who argued that contemporary students strive for opportunities to discover meaning and relevance in their academic work, hence situations that engage them in community-based work can benefit students' learning opportunities. Subsequently, community engagement can be used to progress the public service, teaching and research aspects of the higher education's tripartite mission. This is indicative of the true spirit of an engaged campus.

Application of indigenous cultural knowledge represented on multiple platforms ranging from narrated items like stories, proverbs etc., to more interactive performed methods like folk songs and dances, all of which are acquired through engagement with tribals, can prove extremely valuable to students in many ways. This heightens their interest and provides a basis for increased awareness of tribal concepts and challenges that are further afield than their direct interaction. Having familiarity with certain elements of tribal culture could then encourage them to seek additional information through cultural items (Nakashima and Bridgewater 2000:12). This can be valuable both in an academic sense through enhanced awareness, while also benefiting the students from a practical perspective.

4.6 CONCLUSION

The data and discussion of findings was presented in this chapter. Three main themes, along with twelve sub themes, which are depicted in table 4.5.1 provided a snapshot of the findings. The background and context of tribal communities was discussed, along with issues and challenges they undergo. Efforts made by the university to combat these challenges were further explored. Chapter 5 summarises key findings made in the study and provides recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This study was conducted with the primary aim of exploring how community engagement occurred with a tribal community. It explored how community engagement facilitated community based learning in this context. The gathered data was analysed in Chapter Four. Three main themes and twelve sub-themes emerged from this process. Data collection for the study consisted of interviews and focus group discussions with academic staff and students.

Boyer's framework for University-Community Engagement cohered with the themes of the study. The scholarship of discovery, integration, teaching and application were interspersed in the data. The fieldwork placement of the University of Mumbai corroborates the framework, as it can be regarded as service learning, whereby students experience genuine interaction with the community, distinct from a theoretical understanding of same. The ensuing discussion summarises the findings extracted from the themes and sub-themes in Chapter Four. Recommendations for further research and limitations of the study are also presented.

5.2 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The three main themes drawn from the data viz. from interviews and focus group discussions were as follows:

Themes and sub – themes derived from the data

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
4. Tribal context	4.1. Characteristics of tribal communities. 4.2. Tribal spirituality 4.3. Indigenous healing methodology

5. Challenges facing tribal communities	5.1. Lack of resources and poor infrastructure 5.2. Psycho-social issues 5.3. Cultural factors 5.4. Migration 5.5. Social political challenges
6. Preparedness to engage	6.1. Role of social work academics 6.2. Class based preparedness 6.3. Process of engagement 6.4. Community based teaching and learning

The conclusions of the study will be explained within the context of each of the five objectives.

5.2.1 Conceptualization of tribal communities in rural India

The tribal community in this study was found to be indigenous to the area for many generations. As a result, their behavioural patterns and civic structure is divergent from mainstream society in a number of ways, namely the strong belief in gender equality, communal living as a societal norm, a great degree of emphasis on family bonds, and culture and rituals being deeply ingrained in their psychological makeup. Their lifestyles consist mainly of subsistence farming and hunting (Purkayastra 2016:2). A consequence of these factors, but conversely simultaneously influencing them, the tribal community experiences severe shortage of resources such as access to proper sanitation and adequate infrastructure, while also undergoing socio-political challenges for example underrepresentation of political power along with exploitation by political figures. An interesting deduction seems to be that due to Mumbai, being the economic and political hub of the country, the impact and resultant influence of community engagement on the surrounding rural communities would differ when compared to, for example, rural communities in the mountainous northern regions of India.

5.2.2 The spiritual beliefs and practices of tribal communities in India

The data presented a variety of different aspects regarding the cultural and spiritual philosophies within the tribal community. They regard nature and natural phenomena as their religion. This is expressed as animism which emphasises plants and animals as symbols of divinity. A further part of their belief system are the concepts of music and dance, as these are always performed at all festivals and occasions. Their medicinal and healing practices are passed on from their ancestors.

All these elements taken together need to be included in curriculum coursework design as this will make engagement and preparedness, more beneficial to the community. Musil (2009:62) supports this when he stated “ understanding of the diversity and traditions of alternative cultures, overcoming prejudice against diversity, and relating to traditions apart from one’s own can all be accomplished by learning about them through engagement”.

5.2.3 The university process of engaging with tribals

The data demonstrates that engagement, although often segregated from teaching and research as the primary undertakings of the institution, nonetheless forms an integral component of this work. Community engagement should accordingly encompass all aspects of a university’s tripartite mission, including “facilitating achievement of their research/discovery and teaching/education goals” (Sachs and Clark 2017: 83).

The students from the Department of Social Work prepared for engagement with the tribal community firstly by noting the unique characteristics symbolic of this particular tribe, that could be positively influenced by community integration and upliftment, and then incorporating such discoveries into their body of knowledge. Groccia and Buskist (2018:73) emphasized that by approaching the community in this way and developing rapport, students are less prone to commit errors, and enter into community engagement in ways that will allow them to learn and contribute. A transact walk, community mapping and community profiling were tools utilized to obtain the required information.

Hence, students were well informed theoretically about concepts such as social justice, advocacy and empowerment before total immersion into the community. This was then practically deployed as service learning, whereupon immersion among the tribal community yielded the actual implementation of these concepts. Verma (2015:42) concurred with such

outcomes saying that when academics fully involve themselves in facilitating social upliftment and empowerment, thus sustained progress in the community is created.

5.2.4 Community based teaching and learning in tribal communities

Findings made from the study, which discovered that community engagement is a substantial contributor in facilitating community based learning, this is also supported by Bender (2007:134). The interaction between the university and the community resulted in reciprocal benefit, whereby the students from the Department of Social Work acquired indigenous knowledge and highlighted specific challenges encountered by the community, while the tribals themselves were aided and supported in the resolution or elimination of problems such as economic marginalization. Bernardo *et al.* (2012:189) reinforced the relationship between universities and society is framed by the mutuality of outcomes, goals, trust and respect.

Wilson (2013:281) supported this saying that underscoring that the teaching/learning component is linked to the community through service-learning. Service learning is a type of engaged learning which comprises of experiential learning. This type of learning was impressed on the students, at The University of Mumbai in the form of stronger cultural awareness, differences between tribals and mainstream society and identification of tribal value formation, all of which enhanced their understanding and desire to influence positive change. Service learning furthermore provides opportunities where both the community and the student are the initial recipients and where both service learning and student learning receive equal attention. Reciprocity is a central characteristic of service learning.

5.2.5 A model to guide community engagement with tribals

By analysing and amalgamating all four objectives in the study, a model has been developed that can be used to influence and determine the manner of engagement with tribal communities. Below is the generic structure and template of the proposed model that has emerged from the data.

1. PREPAREDNESS

- Student's orientation prior to fieldwork placement is facilitated by social work academics.
- This is done using tools viz. community rapport building, transact walk, community mapping and participatory rural appraisal.
- Theoretical knowledge related to community development is taught in class.
- Aspects of social justice, empowerment, advocacy and community work are taught.
- The value and principles underlying community engagement are workshopped in class. Some of these values, as prescribed by Suarez-Balcazar, Harper and Lewis (2005:87), include reciprocal trust, joint respect, and respect for diversity and culture.
- The most relevant information regarding the community under study forms part of the preparedness.



2. PROCESS OF ENGAGEMENT

- Students then apply the theoretical knowledge during interaction with community (Einfield and Collins 2008:104).
- Community entry is done respectfully. Discussion occurs with traditional leaders and other community members to understand community issues.
- Relationships are strengthened and rapport is enhanced with community members (Bowen 2005: 4; Youell and Youell 2011:88).
- Strategies are formed with communities on how to develop solutions to problems. When institutions work together with community members to use their knowledge along with established theories, this results in more beneficial outcomes (McNall *et al.* 2015:4).
- Relevant issues are implemented as projects jointly by students and the respective community members.



3. COMMUNITY BASED TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Co-production of knowledge, whereby students and community members both learn from and teach each other, happens at this stage (McLeod 2015:249; Ramaley 2002:14). New and innovative collaboration occurs between the students and communities that increases their joint knowledge. Community members talk about specific issues, whereupon students provide advice or recommendations based on the circumstances along with pre-existing information.
- Active learning using such methods as participatory rural appraisal and community mapping leads to mutually beneficial results.



4. REFLECTION

- Students firstly reflect in small groups on the results of their interaction with the community, whether positive or negative. Accordingly, when students enculturate themselves with the community, this creates empathy and genuine investment in positive outcomes (Bore and Wright 2009 cited in Panwar *et al.* 2014:985).
- These observations should then be transferred to academia in the form of journals and documentation for future reference and analysis.

5.3 CONCLUSION

Many strides were undertaken in engaging the community specifically using community based teaching and learning, by the Department of Social Work at The University of Mumbai. The conceptualisation of tribal communities and their spiritual beliefs and practices were central in the process of engaging the community, and the consequent impact of such activities on community based teaching and learning among the community. This study will prove highly constructive in this field, taking into account the relative shortage of literature on engagement with tribals in India. It would also serve to emphasise the value of service learning to achieving academic outcomes, whereby students that were involved in community engagement acquired a deeper empathy and cultural awareness of issues facing the tribal populace and to a larger extent secular society, while enhancing the vocational social justice directive and the university dictate of empowerment. The eventual intention of all types of social service should always be to sustainably improve the quality of life primarily through empowerment and upliftment through mutual collaborative alliances promoting means such as education, rather than merely enabling aid in the form of

charitable activities (Mitchell 2016:259). The Social Work Department of the University of Mumbai fulfils such objectives, through their fieldwork placements.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of the study:

5.4.1 Empirical work on community engagement needs to be advanced.

In spite of increased ventures related to community engagement within tertiary institutions in India, there remains a deficiency of literature on community engagement. More literature should be written and more studies undertaken with regards to tribals and community engagement that could be utilized to elevate and emancipate tribals should be developed with this outcome in mind.

5.4.2 Research on service learning as a means to facilitate community based teaching and learning can be undertaken.

The research conducted in order to facilitate this study was enriched and validated by direct interaction and reciprocal communication with the community it was based on. This could then be a precedent for further studies that would be conducted. By incorporating it into the curriculum more extensively.

5.4.3 Greater awareness of community engagement among the non-academic public.

By promoting the concept of community engagement as a tool to improve the lives of the tribal and marginalized communities among parties outside academic institutions that have philanthropic and humanitarian concerns in such greater quality of life, these entities could further augment the development and creation of academic curriculums that could benefit these tribals even further, primarily through financial support and advocacy.

5.5 LIMITATIONS

Although this study made important findings with regard to the research objectives, it has a few limitations, as follows:

The tribal community profiled in this study was restricted to one geographical location. Studies could be conducted with tribal communities elsewhere in India, as there are many other tribal communities throughout India. These studies could be collated to possibly identify trends and divergences in the challenges faced by tribal communities in other areas of India, and subsequently devise probable solutions.

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Shannal Rowkith
124 View Street,
Overport
Durban
4091

22 February 2018

Dr. Chandrakant Puri
Professor cum Director,
Centre for Distance Education,
SNDT Women's University,
Mumbai, India

Dear Sir

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY

I am currently registered as a Masters student at the Durban University of Technology in the Department of Management Sciences. The proposed title of my research study is: **Spirituality as a guiding paradigm in community engagement in a rural context in India.**

I hereby request your permission to collect data with MA students, and academics from the Social Work Departments at Mumbai, India. My research proposal will follow for your perusal.

This study will require participants (students) to participate in a focus group discussion and academics to participate in a one on one session which will take place at the site where students conduct their field work. Interviews will last for approximately one hour. Participation is voluntary, and a written informed consent will be obtained from all participants. Confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

If these arrangements meet with your approval, please sign this letter where indicated below. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Shannal Rowkith

**PERMISSION GRANTED FOR THE
REQUEST ABOVE:**

Date: 01.03.2018.

Dr Chandrakant Puri



LETTER OF INFORMATION

Dear Academic

Greetings!! Thank you for agreeing participate in the following research study, titled: Spirituality as a guiding paradigm in community engagement in a rural context, this study is being undertaken as part of my M-tech Degree in Management Sciences.

In order to continue, I would sincerely be appreciate if you would consider participating in an in depth interview which will be held at the practical site where students conduct their practicals. This should last approximately one hour and will be held during non-academic time. Only those who willingly complete the consent form will be included.

There will be no costs for which participants will incur. Your participation could make a valuable contribution to the study. Therefore, your urgent response will be greatly appreciated. The necessary letters of information and consent are attached and can assure that confidentiality and anonymity of individual participants will be upheld. This study has received ethical approval from IREC.

Your participation in the study is greatly appreciated.

Kind Regards,
Shannal Rowkith
M-Tech Student: Management Sciences
Durban University of Technology

Title of the Research Study: Spirituality as a guiding paradigm in community engagement in a rural context in India

Principal Investigator/s/researcher: Shannal Rowkith, BA (Honours) Counselling psychology

Co-Investigator/s/supervisor/s: Raisuyah Bhagwan, PhD.

Brief Introduction and Purpose of the Study:

This research study seeks to explore the university process of engaging with tribal communities. Very little literature however has focussed on community outreach programmes or using the community as a context for strengthening teaching and learning. This study is important, as it highlights how a social work departments use engagement successfully in a rural area in India, as a crucial pillar to support learning and drive engagement. The study is set in Maharashtra, India and is part of a National Research Foundation study which is exploring community engagement in the international context.

Data will be collected from 2 samples:

Sample 1: All the social work Masters students from the University of Mumbai will be used. There are 23 Students.

Sample 2: This will consist of all academic staff from the social work department. There are 6 members of staff.

Outline of the Procedures: An in- depth interview with academics will be held at the site where students conduct their practical's on a date and at a time convenient for you as an academic. Individuals who are involved in the identified project may be interviewed as part of the research study, provided he/she must give consent to be included. Individuals who are not involved with the facilitation or growth and development of the current program will not be included in this research study.

Risks or Discomforts to the Participant: There are no risks which should be incurred by any participants.

Benefits: The completion of this study will strengthen understanding of community engagement in higher education.

Reason/s why the Participant May Be Withdrawn from the Study: All participants may withdraw from the study at any stage if they wish to. Participants must withdraw if they are uncomfortable with the questions or if they do not wish to release a response.

Remuneration: Participants will not receive remuneration of any sort.

Costs of the Study: The participants will not be required to incur costs of any sort for the conduction of this project. All costs incurred through travelling or participation will be the responsibility of the researcher, and not the participants

Confidentiality: Participation in this study is voluntary and the names of participants will not be revealed at any time. Only the name of the group being interviewed will be indicated. Participants' responses will remain strictly confidential and will remain in a safe/vessel for 15 years.

Research-related Injury: Should the participants be harmed in any way by this study, the researcher or supervisor will not be held responsible as full information about the study have been given in advance. Participants should be aware that their participation is at their own risk. That being said, the researcher and supervisor are sure that no harm should arise from such a study.

Persons to Contact in the Event of Any Problems or Queries:

Please contact the researcher, Shannal Rowkith (083 230 3115), or supervisor, Prof. Raisuyah Bhagwan (031-3732197) or the Institutional Research Ethics administrator on 031 373 2900. Complaints can be reported to the DVC: TIP, Prof F. Otieno on 031 373 2382 or dvctip@dut.ac.za

General:

Potential participants must be assured that participation is voluntary and the approximate number of participants to be included should be disclosed. A copy of the information letter should be issued to participants. The information letter and consent form must be translated and provided in the primary spoken language of the research population e.g. isiZulu.



CONSENT

Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, Shannal Rowkith (name of researcher), about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study - Research Ethics Clearance Number: _____,
- I have also received, read and understood the above written information (Participant Letter of Information) regarding the study.
- I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report.
- In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerised system by the researcher.
- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

**Full Name of Participant
 Thumbprint**

Date

Time

Signature / Right

I, Shannal Rowkith (name of researcher) herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

Shannal Rowkith
Full Name of Researcher

Date

Signature

Full Name of Witness (If applicable)

Date

Signature

Full Name of Legal Guardian (If applicable)

Date

Signature

Please note the following:

Research details must be provided in a clear, simple and culturally appropriate manner and prospective participants should be helped to arrive at an informed decision by use of appropriate language (grade 10 level - use Flesch Reading Ease Scores on Microsoft Word), selecting of a non-threatening environment for interaction and the availability of peer counseling (Department of Health, 2004)

If the potential participant is unable to read/illiterate, then a right thumb print is required and an impartial witness, who is literate and knows the participant e.g. parent, sibling, friend, pastor, etc. should verify in writing, duly signed that informed verbal consent was obtained (Department of Health, 2004).

If anyone makes a mistake completing this document e.g. wrong date or spelling mistake a new document has to be completed. The incomplete original document has to be kept in the participant file and not thrown away and copies thereof must be issued to the participant.

References:

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http://www.nhrec.org.za/?page_id=14



LETTER OF INFORMATION

Dear Students

Greetings!! Thank you for agreeing participate in the following research study, titled: Spirituality as a guiding paradigm in community engagement in a rural context in India, This study is being undertaken as part of my M-tech Degree in Management Sciences.

In order to continue, I would sincerely be appreciate if you would consider participating in an in a focus discussion which will be held at the site where you conduct your practical's. This should last approximately one hour and will be held during non-academic time. Only those who willingly complete the consent form will be included.

There will be no costs for which participants will incur. Your participation could make a valuable contribution to the study. Therefore, your urgent response will be greatly appreciated. The necessary letters of information and consent are attached and can assure that confidentiality and anonymity of individual participants will be upheld. This study has received ethical approval from IREC.

Your participation in the study is greatly appreciated.

Kind Regards,
Shannal Rowkith
M-Tech Student: Management Sciences
Durban University of Technology

Title of the Research Study:

Principal Investigator/s/researcher: Shannal Rowkith, BA (Honours) Counselling psychology

(Co-Investigator/s/supervisor/s: Raisuyah Bhagwan, PhD.

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Data will be collected from 2 samples:

Sample 1: All the social work Masters students from the University of Mumbai will be used. There are 23 Students.

Sample 2: This will consist of all academic staff from the social work department. There are 6 members of staff.

Outline of the Procedures: Focus group discussions with students involved in the program will be held at the site where students conduct their practical's, on a date and at a time convenient for you as a student. Individuals who are involved in the identified project may be interviewed as part of the research study, provided he/she must give consent to be included. Individuals who are not involved with the facilitation or growth and development of the current program will not be included in this research study.

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- I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report.
- In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerised system by the researcher.
- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

**Full Name of Participant
 Thumbprint**

Date

Time

Signature / Right

I, Shannal Rowkith (name of researcher) herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

Shannal Rowkith

Full Name of Researcher

Date

Signature

Full Name of Witness (If applicable)

Date

Signature

Full Name of Legal Guardian (If applicable)

Date

Signature

Please note the following:

Research details must be provided in a clear, simple and culturally appropriate manner and prospective participants should be helped to arrive at an informed decision by use of appropriate language (grade 10 level - use Flesch Reading Ease Scores on Microsoft Word), selecting of a non-threatening environment for interaction and the availability of peer counseling (Department of Health, 2004)

If the potential participant is unable to read/illiterate, then a right thumb print is required and an impartial witness, who is literate and knows the participant e.g. parent, sibling, friend, pastor, etc. should verify in writing, duly signed that informed verbal consent was obtained (Department of Health, 2004).

If anyone makes a mistake completing this document e.g. wrong date or spelling mistake a new document has to be completed. The incomplete original document has to be kept in the participant file and not thrown away and copies thereof must be issued to the participant.

References:

Department of Health: 2004. *Ethics in Health Research: Principles, Structures and Processes*

<http://www.doh.gov.za/docs/factsheets/guidelines/ethnics/>

Department of Health. 2006. *South African Good Clinical Practice Guidelines*. 2nd Ed. Available at:

http://www.nhrec.org.za/?page_id=14

Data collection tool

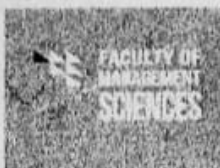
Sample 1: Academics

1. Can you tell me about how the engagement process is set up with tribal communities?
2. How are students prepared to engage with these communities?
3. What preparedness is there for students to deal specifically with tribal communities?
4. Explain how you would conceptualize spirituality. Explain how you would conceptualise community engagement?
5. What spiritually based values and principles guide student's engagement with tribal communities?
6. What are the typical characteristics of tribal communities?
7. How would you define a tribal community?
8. How have students and academics benefited from the engagement process.
9. Can you describe the synergies that exist between spirituality and community engagement?

Data collection tool

Sample 2: Students

1. How would you define spirituality?
2. Can you provide your understanding of community engagement?
3. Describe how you are prepared to engage with tribal communities?
4. Can you identify their needs and how do you as students go about addressing these needs?
5. What spiritually based values and principles are uses to engage communities?
6. What are the specific spiritual characteristics of tribal communities?
7. What are some of the challenges faced by these communities?



MANAGEMENT SCIENCES: FACULTY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (FREC)

30 July 2018

Student Name: S Rowkith

Student No: 20807160

FREC REF: 53/18FREC

Dear Ms Rowkith

MManSci: Public Administration

TITLE: SPIRITUALITY AS A GUIDING PARADIGM IN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN A RURAL CONTEXT IN INDIA

Please be advised that the FREC Committee has reviewed your proposal and the following decision was made: **Approved – Ethics Level 2**

Date of FRC Approval: 25 July 2018

Approval has been granted for a period of two years from the above FRC date, after which you are required to apply for safety monitoring and annual recertification. Please use the form located at the Faculty. This form must be submitted to the FREC at least 3 months before the ethics approval for the study expires.

Any adverse events [serious or minor] which occur in connection with this study and/or which may alter its ethical consideration must be reported to the FREC according to the FREC SOP's.

Please note that ANY amendments in the approved proposal require the approval of the FREC as outlined in the FREC SOP's.

Yours sincerely



Prof JP Govender

Chairperson: Faculty Research Ethics Committee

