

**ROLES AND COMPETENCIES OF SOCIAL CHANGE  
PROFESSIONALS: INTEGRATING EMPIRICAL AND  
THEORETICAL INSIGHTS**

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# **Roles and Competencies of Social Change Professionals: Integrating Empirical and Theoretical Insights**

by

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# Certificate

This is to certify that the thesis titled “Roles and Competencies of Social Change Professionals: Integrating Empirical and Theoretical Insights” being submitted by *Nivedita Narain* for the award of Doctor of Philosophy in Department of Management Studies is a record of *bona fide* work carried out by her under my guidance and supervision at the Department of Management Studies, Indian Institute of Technology Delhi. The work presented in this thesis has not been submitted elsewhere, either in part or in full, for the award of any other degree or diploma.

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## ABSTRACT

The research presented in this thesis aims to contribute to two broad gaps. One, it sharply articulates the roles of social change professionals (SCPs), hitherto invisible and understudied. The explicit purpose of the SCP is to empower individuals, groups and communities to address and solve self-defined problems and concerns. This includes building relationships with key people and organisations in their external environment. Second, it argues that (the potential benefits of) approaches that focus on competencies as a critical differentiator of performance remain underutilised and understudied for professional development in and strengthening of the social sector in India.

The aims of this thesis are thus to examine the roles and competencies of the SCP in the context of (a) client-centred development processes and (b) relational practice, vis-a-vis key actors and organisations (the stakeholders) in *the client systems'* external environment.

The thesis addresses these issues through two sources: existing literature and the perceptions of practicing SCPs. It may be argued that the use of literature may be treated as a part of review. However, we wish to emphasize that literature / paradigms from different fields provide data points, wherein the content was analysed for deciphering the roles of SCPs and their competencies. Eight (participatory) paradigms from fields of psychology, sociology and development were analysed for the purpose. Our interpretation of these paradigms has characterised six features of the SCPs' roles. These features are the duality of outcomes, participation, accountability, non-directive engagement, value alignment and congruence, and reflexive and reflective practice. A set of 39 competencies have been identified, broadly classified into eight competency categories. Seven categories identified from literature are knowledge, cognitive intelligence, emotional intelligence, social awareness, relationship management, conflict management and team and work-group competencies (Bozkurt, 2011). An eighth category identified from this study of paradigms is identified as pro-social behaviour (Batson et al., 2008). The competencies

within these eight categories are uniquely identified by this study. Viewing these from another lens, our results showed that the competencies could also be classified across four client-systems / stakeholder groups. These could be individual-focussed, group-focussed, community-based organization focussed or large system focussed.

In another independent study involving depth interviews with practicing SCPs, a set of 35 competencies were identified. The analysis of the interviews revealed that the task of development was an upward spiralling process wherein the right intervention (read competencies) helped in the upward movement of the client group. Thus, in this study we were able to (a) identify competencies, (b) link them to the various stages of the development of the client group, and (c) characterise the role of the SCP in each of the five emerging stages. This analysis led to a unique set of competencies, further broadly classified into eight competency categories as emerging from the study of paradigms.

These two studies together led to the identification of 45 competencies. We assessed the relative importance of each of these competencies (and their presence) through a questionnaire-based survey of 275 respondents across 101 organisations. The most important 5 clusters comprise 9 competencies. These clusters are a combination of competencies across the eight competency categories. Three competencies are significantly considered more important by older age categories, invoked at later stages of the spiral and critical as SCPs mature in age, and in their roles vis-a-vis external stakeholders. Ten of these competencies are significantly considered more important by respondents affiliated with NGOs, compared to respondents affiliated with business-initiated or government-initiated NGOs.

An overall analysis of gap, between importance and presence of each competency, indicates that all competencies are considered significantly more important than their presence. Within this, three of the top nine competencies according to perceived importance have the highest gaps. Importantly, five of the top ten competencies in terms of gap analysis are emotional intelligence competencies. This indicates the importance of focus

on emotional intelligence competencies while working with social sector organisations. Viewing these competencies through another lens, an emerging typology of competencies is proposed taking an integrated concept of emotional, social, and cognitive intelligence (Boyatzis & Sala, 2004). This offers a framework for describing human dispositions, and a theoretical structure for the organization of personality and linking it to a theory of action and job performance. The contributions of this thesis are towards operationalising a person-centred development process. In addition to proposing a list of preliminary competencies requiring attention, there are multiple angles proposed to design a competency model. This may focus on importance, on analysis of the gap between importance and presence of competencies, on age-category requirements, on organisation type-specific requirements or on categories of competencies in alignment with the behavioural repertoire/approach. The typology of competencies proposed, based on literature surveyed, may also be used as a checklist or observation form to guide further empirical research.

## सारांश

प्रस्तुत किए गए शोध का उद्देश्य दो व्यापक अंतराल में योगदान करना है। एक: यह सामाजिक परिवर्तन पेशेवरों (एससीपी) की भूमिकाओं को स्पष्ट करता है, जो अब तक अदृश्य और जिनका कम अध्ययन किया गया है। एससीपी का स्पष्ट उद्देश्य है - व्यक्तियों, समूहों और समुदायों को सशक्त बनाना, स्वयं परिभाषित समस्याओं और चिंताओं का हल निकालने के लिये उनके बाहरी वातावरण में महत्वपूर्ण लोगों र संगठनों के साथ संबंध स्थापित करना। दूसरा: यह शोध प्रस्तावित करता है कि (एससीपी) की दक्षता पर ध्यान केंद्रित करने के दृष्टिकोण की कमी है।

इस शोध के उद्देश्य एससीपी की भूमिकाएं और दक्षताओं की जांच दो प्रकार से करना है: (ए) 'क्लाइंट-केंद्रित' विकास प्रक्रियाओं के संदर्भ में और (बी) 'रिलेशनल-पैक्टिस', 'क्लाइंट- सिस्टम' में बाहरी कलाकारों और संगठनों (हितधारकों) के संदर्भ में।

यह 'थीसिस' इन मुद्दों को दो स्रोतों के माध्यम से संबोधित करती है: (ए) वर्तमान साहित्य और (बी) एससीपी का काम। हम इस बात पर भी ज़ोर देना चाहते हैं कि अलग-अलग साहित्य/ प्रतिमान डेटा-प्वाइंट प्रदान करते हैं, जिसमें एस सी पी की भूमिकाओं और दक्षता का विश्लेषण कर सकते हैं। इस उद्देश्य के लिये समाजशास्त्र, मनोविज्ञान और विकास के क्षेत्र से आठ (सहभागिता) मानदंड, का विश्लेषण किया गया है। इन मानदंडों में एस सी पी की भूमिकाओं की छह विशेषताओं की व्याख्या है। 39 दक्षताओं की पहचान की गई, तथा मोटे तौर पर उन्हें आठ योग्यता श्रेणियों में वर्गीकृत किया गया है।

सात श्रेणियां साहित्य से पहचाना जाता है: ज्ञान, संज्ञानात्मक बुद्धि, भावनात्मक बुद्धि, सामाजिक जागरूकता, रिश्ते प्रबंधन, संघर्ष प्रबंधन और टीम और कार्यसमूह दक्षता (बोज़कर्ट, 2011)। इस अध्ययन की आठवीं श्रेणी को पहचान लिया गया मानदंड "प्रो सोशल" वर्तन (बैटन इत्यादि, २००८) के रूप में बुलाया गया है। ३९ दक्षताओं की पहचान की गई, जिन्हो मोटे तौर पर आठ योग्यता-श्रेणियों में वर्गीकृत की गई है। हमारे

परिणामों से पता चला है कि दक्षता चार-स्तर में भी वर्गीकृत की जा सकती है: व्यक्ति केंद्रित, समूह केंद्रित, समुदाय आधारित संगठन केंद्रित या बड़े सिस्टम केंद्रित।

एक अन्य स्वतन्त्र अध्ययन में एस सी पी के काम से ३५ दक्षताओं की पहचान की गई है। विश्लेषण से पता चला है कि कार्य-प्रक्रिया के पाँच उभरते चरण हैं। इस विश्लेषण में दक्षताओं का एक अनूठा सेट तय्यार किया गया है, और अधिक विखरत रूप से मानदंडों के अध्ययन से उभरने वाली आठ योग्यता-श्रेणियों में वर्गीकृत किया गया है।

इन दोनों अध्ययनों ने ४५ दक्षताओं की पहचान करने के लिए प्रेरित किया। इनमें से प्रत्येक दक्षता - और उसकी मौजूदगी - का मूल्यांकन किया गया। से प्रत्येक दक्षता (और उनकी मौजूदगी) का मूल्यांकन किया। यह मूल्यांकन १०१ संगठनों के २७५ उत्तरदाताओं की प्रश्नावली पर आधारित है। यह सभी दक्षताएं महत्वपूर्ण हैं, और सभी की उपस्थिति की कमी है। सबसे महत्वपूर्ण ५ क्लस्टर में ९ दक्षताएं शामिल हैं।

इस थीसिस को कार्यान्वित करने के लिये एक व्यक्तिकेन्द्रित विकास प्रक्रिया आवश्यक है। प्रस्तुत शोध प्रारंभिक दक्षताओं पर ध्यान केंद्रित करता है। साहित्य के आधार पर इन दक्षताओं की "टाइपोग्राफी" को लेकर, आगे की अनुभवजन्य शोध के मार्गदर्शन के लिये यह शोध एक 'चेकलिस्ट' का काम भी कर सकती है।

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