TISS and GCIFS International Conference on
Changing World - Changing Families: Diversity and Synergy

(Concept note)

One of the current discourses on families is how rapidly they are undergoing change worldwide. More specifically, of late, there has been an increasing focus on the changing form and function of families, world over, including South Asian countries, as a result of a unique interplay of economic, cultural and social forces. As societies in these countries become more diverse, new concepts about families, gender roles and childhood are introduced and debated. Thus, the emergence of multitude of family forms has broken down the notion of a monolithic form of family, be it nuclear or extended. Today, there is a greater acceptance of family configurations such as single parent to cohabiting to same sex families. Women’s education and their increasing work participation have brought major role changes. They are also accompanied by a slow erosion of the patriarchal edifice on which most family forms are built, and the deconstruction of the gender based ideological notions of breadwinner/home maker divide under the dominance of man who is accorded primary decision making rights. The communication technologies have brought to play new dynamics in the lives of families and, in particular, in the lives of transnational families. Similarly, the relationship between economics, markets, and family life threw up new challenges which need to be explored, interpreted and understood.

In spite of the diversity in family forms, and the multiplicity of forces affecting families, family as a space continued to exhibit the universal values of holding people together by providing care, love, support and identity. Thus, the common thread that binds families together stems from the interpersonal relationships and bonding between them which needs to be understood, interpreted and used in strengthening future family systems.

With an aim to explore these diversities and convergence, the Consortium aims to hold a conference to contextualize the issues relevant to families and individuals in the emerging scenario of change. The objectives of the Conference are:

1. To examine the consequences of the changing contexts for the individual and families in order to identify areas for research, practice and knowledge building

2. To highlight the issues emerging from changing contexts, within and outside the family and the universal strengths of families binding people together

3. To identify areas/strategies of synergy and convergence to make families spaces for equity, care and nurturance

4. To identify strategies for interventions which enhance opportunities for families to grow into such spaces in the context of change
The sub-themes of the conference include:

a) **Diversity in Relationships and Interactions - Pathways for Synergy**
   The changing nature of family interactions and family forms, including inter-generational relationships and the diversity that emerges from such changes will be the focus of this theme. It will also examine the pathways for synergistic and dynamic interplay of these factors. The contexts of these relationships and interactions and interventions play an important role in change and development.

b) **Exploring Contexts for Policy and Practice**
   This theme will focus on the impact of globalization on families in its various facets covering law, policy and practice in the realm of family change. The alignment of policy, practice and diverse family contexts is important for effective action oriented results that are transformatory in nature and create a sustainable impact.

da) **Empowering Families**
   The impact of social, economic, political and environmental contexts and factors that lead to either empowerment or otherwise will be examined. Strategies and interventions to strengthen families will be explored.

b) **Synergistic Interactions between Media and Technology and Families**
   Technology and media have a deep influence in the way families are getting constructed and they are interacting in contemporary times. The role of media and technology in creating both synergy and disharmony in families will be explored under this sub-theme.

e) **Family Studies: Exploring Cross-disciplinary perspectives**
   Historical emergence and trends in family studies in India and abroad; Contemporary challenges and direction for future.

**Who can Attend:**
University teachers/educators, practitioners, research/doctoral scholars, social workers, psychologists and persons from any social sciences discipline.

There will be select paper presentations. The conference will be held in January 2015 at TISS, Mumbai.

**Important Dates:**
1. Inauguration of Conference: January 4, 2015 (3pm)
2. Conference days: January 5 and 6, 2015
3. Deadline for submission of abstracts: October 12, 2014
5. Deadline for registration: December 10, 2014
6. Last day for submission of full papers: December 20, 2014