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Positioning Research

Shifting Paradigms, Interdisciplinarity and Indigeneity

FIRST EDITION

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The range of contemporary critical theories suggests that it is from those who have suffered the sentence of history—subjugation, domination, diaspora, displacement that we learn our most enduring lessons for living and thinking.

—Homi Bhabha (1994, 172)

Research institutions and practitioners are called upon to commit themselves to undertaking research that is participatory; based on indigenous culture and language of the people and that would serve the needs of the local communities.

—UNESCO (1996)

Introduction

In all my years of experience as a generalist social worker, a psychiatric social worker and subsequently a development worker, I have often wondered why the rich Indian literary and philosophical traditions have not been engaged with in social science research. There are a number of historical and mythological stories that can be used to explain the reality as we experience it today. A number of metaphors have been constructed from a shared space that can be utilized in research. We find some forays made into this kind of analysis in psychology, psychiatry and education in the West, but very little in the Indian context. I have made an attempt