

# COURSE MATERIAL

SWKI22M:  
SOCIAL WORK: INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL WORK  
PROFESSION

COMPILED BY  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK  
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## UNIT -I BASIC CONCEPTS

### TOPIC-I: PHILANTHROPY, CHARITY AND SOCIAL WORK

#### a) PHILANTHROPY

**Philanthropy** can be defined as the voluntary effort to increase the well-being of humankind. It includes the giving of money, time, or other resources to people, organizations and institutions. **Philanthropy is an idea or an action that is done to better humanity and usually involves some sacrifice as opposed to being done for a profit motive.**

The origin of the word *Philanthropy* comes from the Greek concept of *philanthrôpía* that translates to: “Love of mankind”, in second century AD. During the Roman Catholic Middle Ages, *philanthrôpía* was superseded by Caritas charity, selfless love, valued for salvation and escape from purgatory. A more modern definition is “private initiatives for the public good which combines an original humanistic tradition with a social scientific aspect”.

#### b) CHARITY

**Charity** is giving alms, or performing other benevolent actions of any sort for the needy with no expectation of material reward. The word *charity* originated after philanthropy in late 5<sup>th</sup> century from the old French word *Chrité* and means, “providing for those in need; generosity and giving”. The practice of charity involves giving money, goods or time to the unfortunate, either directly or by means of charitable trust or other worthy causes.

Most of the organized religions all over world have advocated charity as an essential virtue their followers must possess and an essential element in the practice of all religions. Old testament has laid great stress on charity. Jews have enjoined upon to care and love the neighbours as an important duty of Judaism. Christianity advocates brotherly love. In Islam charity has been equated with prayerfulness. It is one of the five pillars of Islam. Contribution to public treasury (*Bait ul mal*), *Zukat and fitrah* etc. in Hinduism charity has been glorified as an exercise in spirituality and duty to be performed by every Hindu.

### c) DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CHARITY AND PHILANTHROPY

The words *Charity* and *Philanthropy* are often used interchangeably, but actually there is a difference between these two concepts:

- Charity tends to be emotional, immediate response which mainly focused on rescue and relief, whereas Philanthropy is more strategic and built on rebuilding.
  - American philanthropists Andrew Carnegie and J. D. Rockefeller differentiate - charity addresses symptoms, whereas philanthropy sought to change the human condition.
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- According to Philanthor (a philanthropy magazine) (2018), the main difference is that Charity aims to relieve the pain of a particular social problem, whereas Philanthropy attempts to address the root cause of the problem. An example is the difference between sending painkillers to malaria patients, which is *charity*, versus educating the public in affected areas or supporting medical research teams in finding a cure for malaria, which are *philanthropy*.
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### TOPIC-2: SOCIAL SERVICES, SOCIAL SECURITY, SOCIAL WELFARE & SOCIAL REFORM

#### a) SOCIAL SERVICES

Every civilized society makes provision for varied kinds of services such as health, housing, education, recreation, etc. Broadly speaking, social service connotes “an act of helpful activity; help” (Webster’s Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary; 1996). Thus, social service in its broadest sense, means any aid or assistance provided by society to enable its members to optimally actualize their potentials to effectively perform the roles expected or prescribed by society and to remove obstacles that come in the way of personality development or social functioning. Cassidy (1943) describes “social services” as those organized activities primarily and directly concerned with the conservation, the protection and the improvement of human resources.” Friedlander, (1963) social services may include “social assistance, social insurance, child welfare, corrections, mental hygiene, public health, education, recreation, labor protection and housing” (Friedlander, 1963). These services are rendered to all the members of a society, irrespective of their religion, caste, race, language, region, culture, etc.

The two other terms used in literature are: public services and social welfare services. Public services are envisaged and organized by the State as an institution created by society to manage its affairs. Social welfare services are envisioned and provided by people in society as enlightened persons for promoting human and social development. Despite this fine distinction, both the terms are quite often used inter-changeably. On the other hand, social welfare services are those social/public services specifically visualized and designed for the weaker and vulnerable sections of society to enable them to effectively compete with other sections of society.

The characteristic features of social services are:

1. they are visualized and organized by society/state.
2. such services directly benefit all sections of society.
3. the services encompass everything having a direct bearing on the quality of life of people.
4. these services aim at promoting human and social development, protecting human rights of people and creating a sense of duty among them towards society.

Social services are very important for social work because the latter:

1. concerns with promoting human and social development
2. seeks to enhance effective social functioning and create new social institutions required to modify the existing institutions.
3. aims at promoting 'sustainable' development by conserving and developing environment, so that enough resources may be left for future generations also to enable them to lead proper life.

#### **b) SOCIAL SECURITY**

Every person wants protection against any kind of unforeseen event which may endanger his safety and threaten the continuity of his income. This security has been guaranteed to people through varied kinds of institutions. Initially, this was provided through the family, occupational guilds, and in India more so by the joint family and caste system which in the course of time is disintegrating. The proliferation of science and technology, the increase in trade and commerce lead to widespread migration, a change in value systems – increase individualism and materialism – and rapid urbanization. This has forced a sizeable section of society that is unlettered, unemployed and poor to lead sub-human life added to this

insecurity. Realizing that some deliberate efforts were required to ensure security, for the first time in 1935 in England, Sir William Beveridge<sup>1</sup>, came forward with the idea of 'social security' as means of protection against five great giants: want, disease, ignorance, idleness and squalor.

The International Labor Organization<sup>2</sup> (1942) defined social security "as the security that society furnishes through appropriate organization, against certain risks to which its members are exposed." Friedlander (1963) thought social security as a program of protection provided by society against those contingencies of modern life-sickness, unemployment, old age, dependence, industrial accidents and invalidism - against which the individual by his own ability or foresight, cannot protect himself or his family.

Thus, the major characteristic features of social security are:

- i. It is a security deliberately provided as a matter of right, by collective efforts of people in society
- ii. It protects people against different types of contingencies – biological, economic or even bio-economic – that confront people from cradle to grave.
- iii. Such contingencies imperil the working capacity of people and disrupt the continuity of income and impair their ability to lead a decent and dignified life
- iv. Contingencies are such that it is impossible for common people to effectively face the challenges posed by them, utilizing their own as well as their dependents' private resources.
- v. Such collective endeavors made may or may not require the beneficiaries to contribute nominally, for the benefits which they may avail of in case of occurrence of certain specified kinds of contingencies
- vi. Social security benefits may be in the form of cash, kind or both
- vii. Social security provides the necessary confidence that, benefits adequate in quality and quantity will be available whenever required.

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<sup>1</sup> Sir William Beveridge (1942) foresaw social security as an income to take the place of earnings when interrupted by unemployment, sickness or accident, to provide loss of support by the death of another person, and to meet exceptional expenditures, such as those concerned with birth, death and marriage.

<sup>2</sup> The National Commission on Labor in India (1969:162) expresses the view: "Social security envisages that the members of a community shall be protected by collective action against social risks, causing undue hardship and privation to individuals whose private resources can seldom be adequate to meet them."

*Social security is given through social insurance or cash transfer:*

In *social insurance*, prospective beneficiaries are required to make some very nominal contribution for the benefits which they are given in case of occurrence of contingencies. These benefits are so decided that they may be able to cater to assumed average need. However, in certain cases, special exemption may be granted from the requirement of payment of contributions.

*Cash Transfer* may be given to enable people to meet the existing actual need and to lead a minimum desirable standard of living.

A professional social worker needs to understand the concept of social security because he works for promoting human and social development, improving peoples' participation in various types of programs directed towards guaranteeing a minimum desirable standard of living to everyone.

### c) SOCIAL WELFARE

All civilizations since time immemorial have been striving for the wellbeing of mankind. Our sages pray that 'all may be happy' and devised social systems and institutions to promote the welfare of all. Coming from *welfaren*, 'welfare' connotes "the state or condition with regard to good, fortune, health, happiness, prosperity, etc". Dasgupta (1976) observed that social welfare refers 'to the entire package of services, social and economic, that deal with income support, welfare provisions and social security on one hand, and the whole range of social services, on the other.'

Wilensky and Lebeaux identify two dominant conceptions to social welfare - the *residual*, that assumes social welfare institutions coming into play only when the normal structures of supply, the family and market break down, and the *institutional*, that holds welfare services as normal, "first line" functions of modern industrial society.

According to Friedlander (1963), social welfare is the organized system of social services and institutions, designed to aid individuals and groups to attain satisfying standards of life and health, and personal and social relationships that permit them to develop their full capacities and to promote their well-being in harmony with the needs of their families and the community."

Durgabai Deshmukh, the first Chairperson of Central Social Welfare Board (1960) unequivocally thought social welfare to be distinct from the general social services such as education, health, etc. Social welfare is specialized work for the benefit of the weaker and

more vulnerable sections of the population and included special services for the benefit of women, children, the aged as well as the physically, mentally and socially challenged.

The major traits distinguishing social welfare structure are:

1. A formal organizational structure
2. Social sponsorship and accountability
3. Absence of profit motive
4. Integral view of human needs
5. Direct focus on human consumption needs

**Important characteristics of social welfare are:**

1. Existence of a deliberately organized system of services and institutions.
2. Specifically catering to the needs of the weaker and vulnerable sections of society.
3. Recognizes that the weakness and vulnerability are not from any personal fault of people.
4. It enabling weaker and vulnerable people to realize whatever potentials, talents, abilities they may have, to carve out a dignified place for themselves in society, and to effectively discharge the duties and responsibilities of positions they occupy.

#### **D. SOCIAL REFORM**

In every society, cultural degeneration sets in at some point of time, particularly when its followers forget the basic purpose of various customs and traditions. They blindly observe various rites and rituals associated with them, only because their forefathers have been performing them. Consequently, they practice social evils that hamper personality development and effective social functioning. For example, in India the open *varna* system degenerated into a closed caste system abetting practices such as untouchability, unseeability and even unapproachability.

When social evils began to cause human misery, some enlightened individuals started giving a serious consideration in devising measures to get rid of them, thereby introducing social reforms. The term 'reform', according to Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary (1996) means "the improvement or amendment of what is wrong, corrupt, unsatisfactory, etc." According to M.S. Gore (1987), social reform "involves a deliberate effort to bring about a change in social attitudes, culturally defined role expectations and actual patterns of behavior of people in a desired direction through processes of persuasion and

public education.” Social reform thus, broadly refers to the deliberate, collective non-violent attempt by a group of like-minded, to eradicate immoral, unhealthy, corrupt and wrong practices thwarting human and social development.

Major characteristics of social reform include:

- 1) Perceived existence of some social evil impeding proper human growth and social development.
- 2) Collective, focused efforts deliberately made by people to mitigate and eradicate social evil
- 3) An overall satisfaction with the prevailing situations in society and a belief that the Overall system is not to be overthrown.
- 4) Non-violent methods and means to bring about desired changes to evil practices existing through such measures such as persuasion and concretization.

Social reform is important for professional social workers because they challenge and do away with social evils, thereby improving the social functioning of the people and introducing desired changes in social structure and system.

Some of the key social reform movements in India include - the Brahmo Samaj, the Prarthana Samaj, the Aligarh Movement. Some of the major reform in India society include – Abolition of Sati, Widow Remarriage Association (1861), work done by R.C. Bhandarkar and Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade to social reform such as inter-caste dining, inter-caste marriage, widow remarriage and improvement of the lot of women and depressed classes.

### **TOPIC-3: SOCIAL INEQUALITIES**

#### **What is inequality?**

The Cambridge dictionary describes inequality as “the unfair situation in society when some people have more opportunities, etc. than other people”. The United Nations describes it even more simply as “the state of not being equal, especially in status, rights and opportunities”.

While the term itself is quite vast and has various interpretations, for the purpose of simplicity, the two large umbrellas under which we can classify inequality would be



economic inequality and social inequality. Both these categories are deeply intertwined and inequality in one often affects the inequality in another. Inequality is a grave social injustice.

### ***Economic Inequality***

Perhaps the most quantified and calculated form of inequality is the economic variant. Even here, the most predominant forms of inequality measured are those of income inequality and wealth inequality. Income inequality is the inequality in and disparity in the incomes commanded by the top percentile of the population in comparison to the bottom percentiles. While wealth inequality measures look to do the same but by calculating disparities in wealth instead of income.

### ***Social Inequality***

Social inequality “is the condition where people have unequal access to valued resources, services, and positions in the society” (Kerbo, 2003). Here, we are concerned with the inequalities entailed in social stratification: power, class, status, money and lifestyle. Social inequality has been increasing throughout the world, and as it increased it has become fashionable to ignore it.

Social inequality occurs when resources in a given society are distributed unevenly, typically through norms of allocation, that engender specific patterns along lines of socially defined categories of persons. It is the differentiation preference of access to social goods in society brought about by power, religion, kinship, prestige, race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, and class.

In India, few of the most distinctive forms of social inequity come within the spheres of gender, caste, tribes, and religious minorities, where, people coming from the marginalized sections of these social categories, are directly impacted in terms of their opportunities, access to essential utilities, and their potential as a whole.

## TOPIC-4: RIGHTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

### **Rights**

Rights are entitlements to perform certain actions, or to be in certain states. Rights dominate modern understandings of what actions are permissible and which institutions are just. Rights structure the form of governments, the content of laws, and the shape of morality as many now see it. To accept a set of rights is to approve a distribution of freedom and authority, and so to endorse a certain view of what may, must, and must not be done.

#### *Categories of rights:*

We encounter assertions of rights as we encounter sounds: persistently and in great variety. To make sense of this profusion of assertions we can class rights together by common attributes. Rights can be categorized, for example, according to:

*Who* is alleged to have the right: Children's rights, animal rights, workers' rights, states' rights, the rights of peoples.

*What actions or states or objects* the asserted right pertains to: Rights of free expression, to pass judgment; rights of privacy, to remain silent; property rights, bodily rights.

*Why* the right holder (allegedly) has the right: Moral rights are grounded in moral reasons, legal rights derive from the laws of the society, customary rights exist by local convention.

*How the asserted right can be affected* by the right holder's actions: The inalienable right to life, the forfeitable right to liberty, and the waivable right that a promise be kept.

Many of these categories have sub-categories. For instance, natural rights are the sub-class of moral rights that humans have because of their nature. Or again, the rights of political speech are a subclass of the rights of free expression.

### ***Human Rights***

Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status. Human rights include the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education, and many more. Everyone is entitled to these rights, without discrimination.

### a) SOCIAL JUSTICE

Justice is the hallmark of any civilized society. *fiat justitia ruat coleum* (let heavens fall, justice has to be done) has been the guiding principle followed by all civilized societies. Aristotle perceived justice as a “virtue of the soul distributing that which each person deserved”. Its origin, according to Cicero, is traced to the divine law of eternal and immutable morality, making people duty bound.

The term justice is too broad that it eludes any precise definition (Dias; 1985). The nature and form as also the methods and manners of administration and systems of justice vary depending upon the values and norms prevailing at a point in time, in a particular society. These systems, broadly speaking, take two approaches: *protective* – safeguarding people against abuse and exploitation, and *promotive* – creating such conditions in society as may spontaneously ensure equality, freedom, fraternity and provide special opportunities to those who for some reason lag behind and are out of the mainstream.

The term ‘justice’ is used in two senses: the *abstract* – referring to a code of conduct, legal as well as moral, which promotes people’s welfare, and the *concrete* – denoting the faithful implementation of existing laws. Justice gives rise to a sense of duty and concern for others, as well as creates and sustains trust and confidence among people. Not only does it generate an atmosphere of peace and tranquility, but it also sustains law and order thereby optimizing the personal and social functioning.

Social justice, a part of the larger framework of justice, implies within its ambit the idea of ‘just distribution’ of benefits in order to create a just society. It is dynamic; what is socially just keeps changing with time and space. Allen (1950) thought the concept social justice to be vaguely defined. To some it meant ‘distribution’ or ‘redistribution’ of wealth; some others interpreted it as equality of opportunity - a misleading term, since opportunity can never be equal among beings, who have unequal capacities to grasp it.

Social Justice impels to establish a just social order by favoring the removal of structural and systemic inequalities in order to ensure equalization of opportunities to weaker and vulnerable sections of society, who either because of being subjected to social suppression and oppression or being the victims of varied kinds of disabilities and handicaps, are prone to be misused and even abused and exploited. Thus, social justice, in its narrowest sense,

means rectification of injustice in personal relations of people and in broader terms refer to the removal of imbalances in the political, economic and social life of people.

Social justice, according to Justice Krishna Iyer (1980), is a generous concept assuring every member of society a fair deal - remedial of injury, injustice, inadequacy or disability suffered by a member for which he is not directly responsible. The concept broadly encompasses not only distribution of means, benefits, burdens, etc. throughout the society (Miller, 1972) but also biological, social, economic and cultural development of individual in a society (Govind, 1995). India characterized by fairly widespread and serious problems of unemployment, poverty, illiteracy, ill-health and insanitation, stood committed to promote welfare of people; Article 38 of the Constitution of India proclaims our commitment to promote the welfare of people by securing and protecting as effectively, a social order in which justice – social, economic and political – are preserved. The specific objectives of social justice are to:

1. ensure the 'rule of law'
2. guarantee 'equality of opportunity'
3. ensure special opportunities to weaker and vulnerable sections
4. ensure equality of outcome
5. prevent abuse and exploitation of weaker and vulnerable sections
6. preserve the religion and culture of minorities, providing them the necessary freedom to pursue and propagate them without endangering public order and peace

Wherever discrimination, abuse and exploitation existed in the name of color, caste or creed, some kind of arrangement for social justice spontaneously evolved; e.g. in the United States, a system of affirmative action eventually evolved to provide special opportunities for the development of Blacks and the native Red Indians. In India, where social stratification in the form of caste prevails, the Constitution of India assigned special privileges to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes as well as the 'Other Backward Classes'.

## UNIT -2 PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION

### Topic -1: Social Work: Nature and Scope:

#### I. Nature:

Some individuals have personal or family problems. Sometimes they cannot solve these by themselves. So they need outside help. Such help comes from trained people. The individual seeking help is known as a client and the trained person helping him is known as a social worker. The client should have some motivation for self-improvement. Readiness to accept help is a pre requisite condition in social work. The social worker only adds to the clients own efforts to improve his situation. He does not impose his advice or solution on the client, respecting the client's right to self-determination.

#### *Scientific Base of Social Work:*

Social work practice has a strong scientific base. Social workers do not believe in knowledge for its own sake. Social work is based on a scientific body of knowledge, though borrowed from different disciplines of social and biological sciences. Social work like any other discipline has three types of knowledge.

1. Tested knowledge.
2. Hypothetical knowledge that requires transformation to tested knowledge.
3. Assumptive knowledge which is practical wisdom requires transformation to hypothetical knowledge and from there to tested knowledge.

The knowledge is borrowed from sociology, psychology, anthropology, political science, economics, biology, psychiatry, law, medicine etc. All disciplines have contributed much to the understanding of human nature. Social workers make use of this knowledge to solve problems of their clients.

Social work is rooted in humanitarianism. It is "Scientific Humanism" as it uses scientific base. Social work is based on certain values which when organised constitute the "Philosophy of Social Work". Social work is based on faith in the essential worth and dignity of the individual. Man is an object of respect not because he is rich or powerful but because he is a human being. Human nature endows the individual with worth and dignity which, every other human being has to respect.

Social work is against any kind of discrimination based on caste, colour, race, sex or religion. Social work is against "Social Darwinism" and the principle of "survival of the fittest". This means that social work does not believe that only the strong will survive in society and the weak will perish. Those who are weak, disabled and or need care are equally important for social workers. The individual is understood as a whole with the same worth and dignity in spite of differing psychological, social and economic aspects. The social worker believes in the capacity of the individual and also recognises individual differences. The individual's self-determination is given importance. He should be understood from both domestic and cultural points of view. Social work is a combination of "idealism and realism". To a social worker an individual is important but society is equally important. The individual is greatly moulded by social circumstances. But, ultimately the individual must bear the responsibility for his/her conduct and behaviour. The worker has to solve the problem on account of which the client is disturbed. Hence social work is problem solving in nature.

## II. Scope:

The concern of social work's is to help people who are in need so that they develop the capacity to deal with their problems by themselves. It is both science and an art. Social work is science in the sense that the knowledge taken from different disciplines forms the body of knowledge for a social worker and she/he uses this theoretical base for helping people i.e., for practice. What theory postulates has to be put into practice. The required capacity to do it is known as skill. Hence, professional social work with selected knowledge and the set of social work values, has to be transformed into a professional service.

A social worker has to establish a positive relationship with the clients. She should know how to interview and write reports. She should be able to diagnose i.e., find out the cause for the problem and finally she/he should work out a treatment plan. An Assessment of the problem, planning for its solution, implementing the plan and evaluating the outcome are the four major steps involved in social work. Social worker's keen interest in helping the client, alone will not solve the problem. She should know how to help his/her clients. The methods of social work will help him/her to understand ways of helping people. Social work methods are:

1. Social case work.
2. Social group work.
3. Community organisation.
4. Social welfare administration.

5. Social work research.
6. Social Action.

The First Four are known as direct helping methods and the last Two are secondary methods or auxiliary methods. These six social work methods are systematic and planned ways of helping people.

Social case work deals with individual problems- individual in the total environment or as a part of it. An individual is involved in the problem as he is unable to deal with it on his own, because of reasons beyond his control. In any case, his social functioning is disturbed. The case worker with professional relationship tries to bring about a change in the perception and attitudes of the client.

Social group work is a social work service in which a professionally qualified person helps individuals through group experience so as to help them move towards improved relationships and social functioning. The group is the medium and through it and in it individuals are helped to make necessary changes and adjustments.

Community Organisation is another method of social work. A community means an organised systems of relationships but in reality no community is perfectly organised. Community Organisation is a process by which a systematic attempt is made to improve relationships in a community. Identifying the problems ,finding out resources for solving community problems, developing social relationships and necessary programmes to realize the objectives of the community are all involved in community organisation.

Social Welfare Administration is a process through which social work services provided private and public organizations are administered. Developing programs, mobilising resources, involving selection and recruitment of personnel, proper organisation, coordination, providing skilful and sympathetic leadership, guidance and supervision of the staff, dealing with financing and budgeting of the programs and evaluation are, some of the functions of a social worker in administration.

Social work research is a systematic investigation for finding out new facts, test old hypotheses, verify existing theories and discover causal relationships of the problems in which the social worker is interested.

Social action aims at bringing about desirable changes to ensure social progress. It seeks to achieve a proper balance between community needs and solutions mainly through individual and group initiatives and self-help activities, including raising voice against undesirable practices, creating pressure to bring about legislation.

## **Topic-2: Goals & Functions:**

### **I. Goals:**

1. The goal of social work is to reduce suffering by solving people's problems. People have psychosocial problems with regard to their physical and mental health. Apart from this, children and adults have adjustment problems, and some other people may have other problems.
2. In other words, the primary goal of social work is to enhance social functioning of individuals, groups and communities. It helps the individuals, groups and communities in bringing about a change in the environment in favour of their growth and development.
3. In doing so it provides recreational services, helps in making judicious use of leisure time, prevents delinquency and crime in the society, also links client system with the needed resources and so on.
4. Social work provides democratic ideas and encourages the development of good interpersonal relations, resulting in proper adjustments with the family and neighbourhood.
5. Social work does not believe in 'Social Darwinism'. It does not accept the principle of survival of the fittest. Hence it works for social justice through legal aid. It also promotes social justice through the development of social policy. Social work improves the operation of social service delivery network as well.

### **II. Functions:**

The basic functions of social work are **restoration, provision of resources and prevention**. These are interdependent and intertwined.

1. **Restoration of impaired social functioning** has two aspects – curative and rehabilitative. The curative aspect eliminates the factors responsible for the individual's impaired social functioning. That means disturbed interpersonal relations are corrected by removing the factors responsible for it. After removing the factors responsible for the problem, the individual has to adjust to the new remedy or device suggested. The



individual is helped to adjust to the needs of the new situation. That is what is known as rehabilitative aspect. For example, a hearing aid is suggested as a curative measure for partially deaf child, whose social relations are impaired due to the problem. Getting oneself adjusted to the hearing aid is the rehabilitative aspect.

1. **Provision of resources** has two aspects, the developmental and the educational. The developmental aspect is designed to enhance effectiveness of the resources and to improve personality factors for effective social interaction. For example Mr & Mrs X are living happily in spite of some differences of opinion. They are not going in for a divorce and there is no problem in their marriage. But with the help of a family counselling agency, they can sort out their differences and improve their relationship. This is what is known as the developmental aspect. The educational spectrum is designed to acquaint the public with specific conditions and needs for new or changing situations. For example, a talk given by a counsellor to alleviate family and marriage problems is an educational process.
2. The third function of social work is **prevention of social dis-functioning**. It includes early discovery, control or elimination of conditions and situations that potentially could, hamper effective social functioning. For example, starting a youth club in some areas for boys may help prevent juvenile delinquency. Pre-marital counselling for youth may prevent marriage problems in future.

### **Topic-3: Major (Generic) Principles of Social Work:**

Principles are statements of do's and don'ts to get best results while practicing social work. They are the guide-posts for the professional to carry out the work in the field. Principles are elaboration of the values in the form of understandable statements to practice a profession. For example the value of dignity and worth of an individual is expressed in the principle of belief in the self-determination of an individual or group or a community. The principles are time tested and arrived at out of vast experience and research.

The most widely discussed generic principles of social work are as follows:

Principle of Acceptance.

Principle of Individualisation.

Principle of Communication.

Principle of Self-determination.

Principle of Confidentiality.

Principle of Non-judgmental Attitude.

Principle of Controlled Emotional Involvement.

### **1. Principle of Acceptance:**

The client and the social work professional should both accept each other for getting the best results. The client should accept the worker because the worker is the one who is helping the client to overcome his problem situation. In social work situations the client may approach the social worker directly or the social worker may be nominated by the agency or someone might have referred the client to the social worker. Unless the client feels that the social worker has the potential to understand his predicament and is concerned about helping him out of the problem the client may not cooperate in the relationship through which the social work intervention is to be planned. Similarly the worker should also accept the client as a person with a problem who has come to him for help. Irrespective of the appearance and background of the client the worker should accept the client as he is, without any reservations. Mutual acceptance is the beginning of the process of establishing a strong professional relationship towards working out a solution to the client's social functioning.

### **2. Principle of Individualisation:**

This principle reminds the social worker that while dealing with the client it is to be kept in mind that the worker is not dealing with an inanimate object or inferior being. Because the client could not find a way out of his problem, he need not be looked down upon as a person without dignity, worth or value. This is a general response the client gets from the community. The social worker, as a caring and helping professional should believe that the client is an individual with dignity, worth and respect and has the potential to come out of his undesirable situation. Further, the social worker should always consider that each client is unique and distinct from other clients having a similar problem as each person responds and reacts to the same stimuli differently and gets into or get out of different problem situation in different ways.

### **3. Principle of Communication:**

In social work, the communication between the social worker and the client is of paramount importance. The communication could be verbal, that is oral or written, or non-verbal where gestures, signs or actions are used to send the message. Most of the problems concerning human relations arise due to faulty communication.

The social worker should have enough skills to grasp the verbal and nonverbal communication of the client. Communication is stressed in social work relationship because the backgrounds of the client and the worker may be different, the mental state of the client and the worker may vary. The environment in which the communication takes place may change from time to time giving enough scope for miscommunication. Therefore the worker should make all the efforts to see that the communication between him and the client is proper. The client should be made to feel comfortable and at ease to express his thoughts, feelings and facts. Further, he should be assured that the worker understands correctly what he wants to convey. For this, techniques such as clarifications and reclarifications, elaborating what the client has said, questioning and reframing of what the client has said, can be effectively used. Similarly the worker has to make sure that the client understands correctly what he is conveying to him. For this the worker may ask the client to repeat what he is saying.

#### **4. Principle of Confidentiality:**

This principle provides a strong base for effective use of social work intervention. It helps in building a strong worker client relationship. In social work it is most important to provide information to the worker. This ranges from simple factual information to what may be very confidential. A person may not be willing to share certain information about his personal details with anyone unless the person with whom it is shared is trustworthy. He must have confidence that workers will not misuse it to cause discomfort, or to ridicule or to cause damage to his reputation. In social work unless the client provides all the information that is necessary for the worker, it is not possible to help the client. For this to happen the client should have absolute faith in the worker that the information passed on to the worker will be kept confidential and will be used only for assessing and working out possible solutions to the client's problem. That is why the worker should assure the client that the confidential information about the client is not divulged to others to the disadvantage of the client.

#### **5. Principle of Self-determination:**

This principle emphasizes the client's right to self-determination. Every individual has the right to assess what is good for him and decide the ways and means to realise it. In other words, it points out that the social worker should not impose decisions or solutions on the client simply because the client has come to him for help. No doubt, the client has come to social worker because he could not solve the problem by himself. The social worker should support and guide the client to develop insights into his social situation in the correct perspective and encourage and involve him to take decisions that are good and acceptable

to him. In this way the client is helped not only to realise his potentialities but also to feel independent and like a person with worth and dignity.

#### **6. Principle of Non-judgmental Attitude:**

The principle of non-judgmental attitude presumes that the social worker should begin the professional relationship without any bias. That is, he should not form opinions about the client, good or bad, worthy or unworthy. He has to treat the client as somebody who has come to him for help and he should be willing to help the client without being influenced by the opinions of others about the client or his situation. However it is to be noted that a non-judgmental attitude does not mean not making professional judgments about the problem situation and the various options being considered in order to tackle the problem.

#### **7. Principle of Controlled Emotional Involvement:**

The principle of controlled emotional involvement guards social worker from either getting too personally involved in the client's predicament or being too objective. In the case of the former the worker may over-identify with the client because he finds a lot of similarities between the problem situation of the client and over life situations or with the personality of the client. This may interfere with the professional relationship and judgments about the client's problem. The worker may start sympathising with over indulging in the client's life and this may interfere with the client's right to self-determination and independence.

#### **Topic-4: Value Base of Social Work:**

Values are fundamental norms and preferred-behaviour patterns, shared by members of a society or a subgroup which aim at integrating and channelling the organised activities of the members. Any professional activity is guided by a set of values. The values of a profession are its basic fundamental beliefs and preferred behaviour patterns to be upheld by the professionals while practicing.

Social work as a profession deals with people having problems of social adjustment and social functioning, has its own values that guide its practitioners. These core values have evolved over a period of professional practice, and these are common to all social work practice situations, irrespective of the methods.

Social work values focus on three general areas: values about people, values about social work in relation to society, and values that inform professional behaviour. Some of the fundamental values of social work are discussed below:

- I. *Conviction in the inherent worth, integrity and dignity of the individual.* This value reminds the social worker that every client that comes (with a problem) to him is not to be

considered as a person having no value and no virtue because he is in a disadvantageous situation. The client is as worthy as any other person and the client is in that situation because of many other factors acting upon him. Given an opportunity to understand and analyse the social situations better, the person may get out of the problem and may not get into a similar problem situation again.

2. *Belief in democratic functioning.* Social work relies on the democratic process while dealing with the client system. This implies that decisions are taken through consensus and nothing is imposed on the client.
3. *Belief in equal opportunity for all,* limited only by the individual's capacities. This value expresses the need for social justice. Social work fights against social injustices meted out to the disadvantaged and vulnerable sections of society. Irrespective of caste, religion and economic status, intelligence, etc., everyone must have equal access to societal resources.
4. *Social worker's social responsibly towards himself, his family, and his society.* This value cautions the social worker not to neglect himself, his family and the society in which he is living while discharging his professional duties.
5. *Transmit knowledge and skills to others.* This value instructs the social worker to provide the information that he has, that would enable the client to take care of himself, in case the client faces similar problems in future. This is to ensure that the client does not become dependent on the social worker throughout his life.
6. *Separating personal feelings from professional relationships:* This value reminds the social worker that he should not allow personal feelings to intrude in a professional relationship, as this may make him over concerned or develop a biased or prejudiced view about the client and his problem situation. Therefore he should be watchful about any of his personal feelings are affecting his professional relationship.
7. *Assume high standards of personal and professional conduct:* It emphasizes that the conduct of the social worker should be exemplary at both personal and professional levels. As a professional, he should follow the code of ethics outlined for the social work practitioner. The success of any profession depends on the integrity and character of the professionals practicing it.

## UNIT -3 METHODS OF SOCIAL WORK

### METHODS OF SOCIAL WORK

Methods in social work have been categorized into primary and secondary methods. Case work, group work and community organisation are the primary methods and social welfare administration, social action and social work research are the secondary methods.

## METHODS OF SOCIAL WORK



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### I. PRIMARY METHODS

#### 1. Social Casework

Social case work is one of the oldest methods of social work which is being practiced by social workers across the globe. It is one of the primary methods that enable the social functioning of individuals. It is a method which is based on one to one relationship. A method is well understood to be an orderly way of procedure and therefore it is always carried out towards achievement of a specific aim. Case work is one such method that social workers use to help people of all ages and from various sections of society to enhance their social functioning and to cope more effectively with their problems.

It deals with individual problems through one-to-one relationships guided by the social caseworker's professional knowledge. Under the method, the social caseworker attempts to repair the impaired relationship of the client with his social environment. Through a guided interaction, they enable the client to adapt to their social environment. Through this method, the caseworker discovers different aspects of the client's problem, prepares an appropriate treatment plan, and finally, with professional knowledge of social relationships,

tries to bring about necessary changes in the attitude and behaviour of the client in favour of his own growth and development.

Mary Richmond gave us the deepest insights into the nature of social work and provided the best definitions of case work - 'Social case work may be defined as the art of doing different things for and with different people by cooperating with them to achieve at one and the same time their own and society's betterment'.

## **2. Social Group Work**

Social group work is another primary method of social work. It is a process in which the individuals in a social group are helped by a professionally qualified worker, who guides their interaction through planned programme activities so that they may be able to relate themselves with others and find growth opportunities. In this method, the group worker uses the group as a potential tool for individuals' positive change and personality development. In group work, individuals in the group are most important, and all programme activities revolve around their needs for growth. Through the group work process, they are helped to improve their relationship and personality traits, which may help them develop themselves and their community.

The group work method is functional at two levels the individual and the entire group. Social group work helps individuals to develop their inherent potential and identify their innate abilities to cope better with their environment. It helps them to learn and inculcate new patterns of behaviour, which in no way are limited to their place within the group but need to be sustained beyond their participation in their life. Thus group work provides emotional and social support to its members; encourages democratic participation and citizenship; assists them in learning and performing new roles and remedies their maladjustments. The group work process is different from case work. Here the interaction between members is the platform for bringing about change. The relationship between worker and member, worker and group, member and member, and member to group generate a lot of forces of attraction and interaction. Using these bonds the group becomes an instrument for meeting the basic needs and strengthening human capacities. A unique feature of the group work process is its use of programme media. The media which are commonly used in group work are play, discussion, theatre, arts and crafts, music, dance, outings and parties. Through involvement in these activities, assuming various roles and responsibilities, abiding by rules and regulations and performing activities the members grow in multiple ways.

Group work is a method of working with people in groups. A group can be made up of two or more people. Group work is an approach aimed at personal growth, enhancement of social functioning, and for the achievement of socially desirable goals.

Kanopka (1960) describes group work as ‘an approach consciously directed toward developing the individual’s greatest capacity while relating him to the group and learning when he has to contribute and when he has to withdraw’. According to her social group work is a method of social work which helps persons to enhance their social functioning through purposeful group experiences.

### **3. Community Organization**

Community organisation is the third primary method of social work, also called as the macro method of social work. Working with communities has been recognised as a critical work for social workers. Indeed, the community is a natural site for practice because the individuals who are the main focus of social work practice live in communities. It is a process through which efforts are directed towards meeting the community's needs by organising the human and material resources of the community. Identifying problems, finding resources relevant to their needs, developing and managing inter-personal and inter-group relationships, and planning and executing practical programme activities are some of the specific actions in the community organisation method. The community members' organised and collaborative effort for their own development is the primary concern of this method.

According to M. G. Ross, community organization is a process by which a community identifies its needs or objectives, orders or ranks these needs or objectives, develops the confidence and the will to work at these needs or objectives, finds the resources (internal or external) to deal with these needs or objectives, takes action in respect to them, and in so doing extends and develops cooperative and collaborative attitudes and practices in the community.

There are four major ideas reflected in the definitions of community organization:

- The idea of cooperation, collaboration and integration.
- The idea of meeting needs and of bringing a balance between needs and resources.
- The idea that community organization deals with program relationships as contrasted with the direct services of casework and group work.



- The broad philosophical concept of community organization as furnishing a working relationship between the democratic process and specialism.

## **II. AUXILIARY/SECONDARY METHODS OF SOCIAL WORK**

These are those methods that are intended to support the primary techniques. Here, the social worker indirectly deals with the client's problem.

- a) Social Welfare Administration
- b) Social Work Research
- c) Social Action

### **1. Social Welfare Administration**

Social welfare administration is one of the secondary methods of social work. It refers to how social policy is transformed into social service. In other words, it is a process to manage social work or social welfare affairs. Developing programmes, mobilising resources, recruiting and involving suitable personnel, proper organisation, coordination, skilful leadership, supervision and staff guidance, budgeting, and evaluation are specified activities in the social welfare administration method.

Social welfare administration is a method of practice that looks for administrative and managerial skills among practitioners in executing welfare services. It is used to transform social policy into action. It is a two-way process of transforming policy into concrete social services and operational experience to recommend policy modification (Rameshwari & Ravi, 1998). This method uses scientific and administrative techniques of planning, implementing, directing, monitoring, organising, reporting, coordinating and evaluating services rendered for the welfare and development of the people. Its scope includes Planning, Organising, Staffing, Directing, Coordinating, Reporting and Budgeting (POSDCoRB).

### **2. Social Work Research**

Social work research is another important method of social work. It refers to the systematic and critical enquiry of the questions encountered by social work professionals in the field of application. This method makes efforts to find answers to the existing and emerging social work problems to make them useful in functional areas. Like social sciences, social

work research contributes a lot to the storehouse of its knowledge and helps better plan and implement social work programmes.

The effective planning and implementation of development programmes and projects in the country depend mainly on reliable, adequate and valid data. Social work research is the systematic and scientific study of social problems to produce knowledge for planning and carrying out social work problems. It is a powerful tool in all social work settings and is used in all the social work methods discussed earlier. For instance, all the social problems we have been citing so far can only be understood if we have scientific and systematic methods to find out their various causes to formulate specific intervention strategies to arrive at solutions.

*The following highlight the importance of social work research:*

- i. It helps identify the social problem, its intensity and extensiveness, its causal factors, its impact on the target population, and its repercussions on the people's social life.
- ii. Gives an understanding of the factual ground realities (not mere perceptions) of the social situations, which aid in conceptualising the pros and cons of possible intervention strategies.
- iii. Helps social workers gain in-depth knowledge about a social problem, factors contributing to it and its impact on the socio-cultural and economic life of clients.
- iv. Helps to focus on social issues prevailing in the organisation by studying various aspects such as the team climate to understand factors affecting team effectiveness through proper understanding of group effectiveness (Bhattacharyya, 2008).

### **3. Social Action**

The social action method of social work is the one that is used to bring about desirable changes in the flawed system for ensuring social progress. Through this method, attempts are made to mobilise people, create awareness of existing problems, organise them and encourage them to raise their voice against undesirable practices which hampers their development. Finally, create pressure for bringing about relevant legislation for social progress. This method seeks to relate the community needs with the solution of the problems mainly through collective initiatives.

This was first coined by Mary E. Richmond in 1922. According to her, it is the “mass betterment through propaganda and social legislation”. Unlike other methods, social action emphasises essential long-term changes in established social institutions. It covers social, religious and political reform movements, social legislation, racial and social justice, human rights, freedom, and civil liberty.

As a method of social work, it adheres to the philosophy of professional social work, which does not blame people for deficiency or problem; believes in the dignity and worth of human beings; rejects the doctrine of laissez-faire and survival of the fittest; adopts a commitment to the capacity of all people to take action through a non-elitist highly skilled process; and facilitate members to make choices and take action for themselves. This calls for skills used in combination with professional social work ethics and principles.

Social action entails a confrontation with authorities and sometimes involves taking difficult positions. Social action is different from other social work methods that employ specific strategies and tactics as tools to attain its goals. Negotiation, persuasion, competition, disruption, collaboration, bargain, boycotts, sit-ins, strikes, marches, fraternisation, tax-refusal, picketing, etc. It could be said to be a form of radical social work. The main focus is to increase political pressure on decision-making processes so that oppressed groups can receive equitable services, resources and power.

## UNIT – 4: SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION

### TOPIC- I: SOCIAL WORK AS A PROFESSION (ATTRIBUTES)

There are five key attributes of social work profession. They are as following:

#### I. Systematic Body of Theory:

The skills that characterize a profession flows from and is supported by knowledge that has been organized into an internally consistent system called a body of theory. The practice of a social work profession involves the application of scientific knowledge learned during the course of professional education.

It has three types of knowledge:

- a. Tested Knowledge- Knowledge that has been established through scientific study (research)- Comes in the form of borrowed knowledge from different professions and disciplines.
- b. Hypothetical Knowledge- Still has to undergo transformation into tested knowledge, even if tentatively such knowledge may be accepted to explain certain facts.
- c. Assumptive Knowledge- Practice wisdom

#### II Professional Authority:

- Extensive education in the systematic theory of discipline provides the professional with a type of knowledge which the layman does not have. The professional's judgement and authority is respected and accepted by the client. The authority ascribed to the professional by reason of her educational background gives the client a sense of security that the professional has the capacity to help him with his problem.

#### III. Community Sanction:

The community sanctions social work profession's authority by way of giving it certain powers and privileges.

#### IV. Regulative Code of Ethics:

Social work, just like any other professions, has a built-in regulative code which compels ethical behaviour on the part of its members. This code serves to check possible abuses which can arise out of a profession's exercise of authority.

#### V. Professional Culture:

Social work profession like other professions has a professional culture which mainly consists of its values, norms and symbols. *Professional norms* are accepted standards of behavior of doing things, which guide the profession in various settings. *Social Values* refers to the basic and fundamental beliefs of a professional group – reason of existence. *Symbols* – professional emblems, insignias, dress, history, vocabulary etc.

## TOPIC-2: PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORK ASSOCIATIONS

### I. National Association of Professional Social Workers in India (NAPSWI)

#### What is NAPSWI

National Association of Professional Social Workers in India (NAPSWI) is one of largest member-based organization of professional social workers in the country. Established in 2005, NAPSWI is a non-profit, non- political, national level organization dedicated to the promotion of standard and status of social work profession. NAPSWI intends to promote the social work profession across the country with the aim of improving the quality of services in the social welfare and social development sectors on one hand and to protect interests of social work professionals on other.

NAPSWI believes in shaking hands with different stakeholders- be it social work educational institutions, government, non-government, civil society or any likeminded.

**Vision:** To create a compassionate fraternity of professional social workers.

**Mission:** To advance excellence in education, training and practice of professional social work through – education, research, training, networking, advocacy, resource development

**Goal:** The main aim of NAPSWI will be promotion and protection of interest of social work profession and professionals in India.

#### Objectives:

- To promote the profession of social work across the country with the aim of improving the quality of service in the social welfare and social development sectors.
- To act as a national level organisation and to represent social work professionals and profession at national and international level.
- To improve the quality of social work education training and practice in the country and promote such activities as are conducive to social work profession and social work professionals.
- To undertake, organise and facilitate academic and professional interaction through studies, courses, training courses, conferences, seminars, workshops and lectures and research in matters relating to social work profession and professionals.

- To develop code of conduct for professional social workers in the field of education, research, action and practice aimed at enhancing the status of social work profession and performance of the professionals.
- To work for better working conditions and conditions for work of social work professionals in general in India and elsewhere.
- To co-operate and collaborate with any such organisations/institutions at regional/state/national or international level having similar objectives and similar international levels.
- To open its branches at state level/regional level/zonal level in order to promote and strengthen the NAPSWI.
- To publish journal research papers, books, encyclopaedia etc. directly or indirectly related to social work profession.
- To work for protection and promotion of the rights and interests of the members at different levels and initiate measures aimed at providing scholarships, awards, recognitions and improving working conditions and conditions for work professionals.
- To do any activity permissible under the law of land which may instrumental or incidental in promoting the aims and objectives of the society.

## 2. National Association of Social Workers (NASW)

### About NASW

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) is the largest membership organization of professional social workers in the world. NASW works to enhance the professional growth and development of its members, to create and maintain professional standards for social workers, and to advance sound social policies.

The National Association of Social Workers was established in 1955 through the consolidation of the following seven organizations:

- i. American Association of Social Workers.
- ii. American Association of Psychiatric Social Workers.
- iii. American Association of Group Workers.
- iv. Association for the Study of Community Organization.
- v. American Association of Medical Social Workers.
- vi. National Association of School Social Workers.
- vii. Social Work Research Group.

**Functions:**

- i. ASW's primary functions include promoting the professional development of its members.
- ii. Establishing and maintaining professional standards of practice.
- iii. Advancing sound social policies, and providing services that protect its members and enhance their professional status.
- iv. The Association developed and adopted the NASW Code of Ethics and other generalized and specialized practice standards.
- v. Certification and quality assurance are promoted through the Academy of Certified Social Workers, the NASW Register of Clinical Social Workers, and the Diplomate in Clinical Social Work.
- vi. Among NASW's political action programs are Political Action for Candidate Election and Educational Legislative Action Network.
- vii. The Association also sponsors, through its 56 chapters in the U.S. and abroad, professional conferences and continuing education programs, and produces journals (such as the flagship *Social Work*), books, and major reference works for the profession.

**National Association of Social Workers Foundation:**

The National Association of Social Workers Foundation (NASWF) is a charitable organization created to enhance the well-being of individuals, families, and communities through the advancement of social work practice. It was founded in 2001

**TOPIC 4: CODE OF ETHICS IN SOCIAL WORK**

All social workers are beholden to the Social Work Code of Ethics —otherwise known as the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics — during their studies and vow to abide by its standards and principles throughout their careers.

The code serves six purposes:

- i. To establish the core values upon which the social work profession is based.
- ii. To create specific ethical standards that should guide social work practice and reflect the core values.
- iii. To help social workers navigate professional considerations and obligations when ethical uncertainties arise.

- iv. To provide ethical standards to which the social work profession can be held accountable.
- v. To initiate new social workers to the profession's mission, values, and ethical principles and standards.
- vi. To create standards by which the social work profession can assess if a social worker has engaged in unethical conduct. Social workers who pledge to abide by this code must cooperate with its implementation and disciplinary rulings based upon it.

The code is also based on the six core values of the social work profession:

- i. Service
- ii. Social justice
- iii. Dignity and worth of the individual
- iv. Importance and centrality of human relationships
- v. Integrity
- vi. Competence

### **Major Points from the Social Work Code of Ethics**

The code is composed of thematic sections that outline a social worker's responsibility to clients, colleagues, employers, and the profession in general. Following is a summary of some of the major points from a few of the sections.

#### **Responsibility to Clients**

Social workers must:

- Make clients their primary responsibility.
- Foster maximum self-determination in clients.
- Respect the privacy of clients and keep information that has been shared during the course of their duties confidential.
- Charge fees for services that are fair and considerate to clients.

#### **Responsibility to Colleagues and Employers**

Social workers should:

- Treat colleagues with respect, fairness, and courtesy.
- Adhere to professional obligations as determined by their employers.

#### **Responsibility to the Social Work Profession**



Social workers should:

- Uphold, represent, and advance the values of the social work profession.
- Help the profession make social services available to the general public.
- Educate themselves to become culturally competent and understanding of diversity.

## TOPIC – 5: CAREER IN SOCIAL WORK

Today the society is becoming more and more complex in its working. The prime slogan of today's world is the survival of the fittest. This has increased the number of helpless, deprived and disadvantaged. Here is role of social work comes into play. Social work utilizes the resources to sort out the problems of such people and try to ameliorate and alleviate their pain and suffering. Social workers try to prevent social problems caused by poverty, unemployment, inadequate health and education facility, alcoholism, drugs abuse. They also try to improve the life of certain disadvantaged like disabled, old aged, orphan and women. The days are gone when social work was done for philanthropic purpose. But now it become a professional course offered by institutes like TISS, IRMA and Delhi School of Social Work. Keeping in eyes the proliferation of NGOs in every nooks and corner of the country, many students now prefer social work courses and get wide varieties of opportunities.

**There are ample job opportunities for social work degree holders in government, non-governmental and corporate sectors.** Opportunity in the governmental sector is mainly in the community development projects pertaining to health, education, rural development, child, woman, tribal welfare, livelihood generation etc.

Work in NGOs' can be specific to either urban, rural or tribal areas. Students opting social work as career may find job in child welfare and family service agencies for providing mental, health, medical, educational and correctional services. Some social workers help clients who face a disability, life-threatening disease, social problem, such as inadequate housing, unemployment, or substance abuse. Social workers also assist families that have serious domestic conflicts, sometimes involving child or spousal abuse. In schools, social workers often serve as the link between students' families and the school, working with parents, guardians, teachers, and other school officials to ensure that students reach their academic and personal potential. They also assist students in dealing with stress or emotional problems.

Some MSW degree holders can prefer to be self-employed by establishing their own NGOs. Globalisation has widened the scope of employment for student opting for social work as their career. They may choose to join international NGOs like Amnesty International, Oxfam and Green Peace etc. New problems relating to environment has further forced social work to transgress its traditional limit. Now many NGOs and government agencies are working for environmental protection and conservation where people from social work background can find a good job.

Postgraduates in Social Work also have job opportunities in the industrial and corporate sector. Especially in India with mandatory Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) social workers are engaged with many companies helping in CSR project planning and implementation. The specialised Human Resource Management students of social work in different corporates in Human Resource Cell/Departments.

Additionally, social work also allows degree holders to conduct research as PhD degree, or get engaged with various agencies as research or evaluation consultants related to the developmental problems and/or related interventions.

Advocacy is also taken by many professional social workers as a career option, for improved services, or become involved in planning or policy development. Other types of social workers include policymakers, who develop and implement programs to address many social issues. Some social workers are even working as fund raisers with various local, national and international organization in India and across globe.