

# Social Work Intervention and Practice in Different Settings

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**Abstract:** *Helping to help is a core idea behind the leading profession named social work. It is observable fact that the country like India has accepted advance technologies, strategies, methodologies & much more from western/foreign countries. The mental health of a person is concerned, is an integral & vital part of health. The definition of health, given by W. H. O. in 1948 says there are many parameters for a person to fall in category of healthy. Mental health is one of them. Manier factors in India are responsible for health deterioration in mental health. The statistics on mental health work force in India says that only 0.07 psychiatric social workers are employed per 100, 000 populations. The above statement can be analysed in such a way that there is a need for social work intervention in Mental Health care institutions. The increasing numbers of Mental illness patients with major or minor illnesses are an alarm clock for Social Work intervention in India. The disturbances in Mental Health are observed starting from school to higher educational institutions. The scopes of Social Work intervention are in NGO sitting, correctional setting and more where the human beings are surviving. The present paper is an attempt to portray the Social Work Practice & intervention in different areas. The conceptual framework on mental health and illness will be focused on followed by the statistics on Mental illness in India. In addition to this, the major and minor (Psychotic & Neurotic) mental illnesses will be discussed.*

**Keywords:** Social work profession, mental health, mental illness, family intervention.

## 1. Introduction

Social work is a profession which focuses on improvisation of the health and social well - being of individuals, families, groups and communities. Respect for dignity & worth of an individual is the core value of to the achievement of social justice. Social workers work with living being for their assessment, resolution, preventing & for lessening the impression of psycho - social, physical and mental health pertaining matters. The social work profession has a wide & broad scope. Like other professions, social work profession deals with men & not machines or materials. The social worker is a person who helps other person to help themselves. Every human organism comes up with some aspirations & expectations from every day with a rising sun. The paper is an attempt to justify with the scopes of social work profession in different spheres of society. As far as, the mental health is concerned, the stand of social worker in mental health services is very recent. The paper precisely throws light on social worker in mental health setting. The core focus is social worker in community setting, as school social worker & a psychiatric/mental health social worker.

The following are some of the required knowledge, skills and abilities of a social worker:

- Knowledge on normal and abnormal human development and behavior.
- Skilled in development and maintenance of relationship with mentally ill patients.
- Skill in communication with patients and their families who is experiencing distress.
- Skill in interviewing to merge data required in the diagnosis for needs of individuals and their families.
- Skill in organizing clear, crisp, written case narratives and reports.

- Ability to maintain effective working relationships with both medical and paramedical institutional staff and public and private sector professional personnel.
- Ability to understand organizational systems and how to work with them for the advantage of the patient.
- Ability in assessing the level of acuteness of patients' and the potential for explosive behavior.
- Ability to build and maintain operative working relationships with representatives of a wide variety of community agencies.<sup>1</sup>

## Social Work Intervention in Mental Health as Psychiatric Social Work

The field of Psychiatric Social Work is occupying a prominent professional role not only in mental health services but also considered as a needed service in various general, medical and rehabilitation programmes. Application of professional Social Work concepts, methods, techniques and skills in psychiatric services are the key elements of psychiatric social work profession.<sup>2</sup>

Psychiatric social worker:

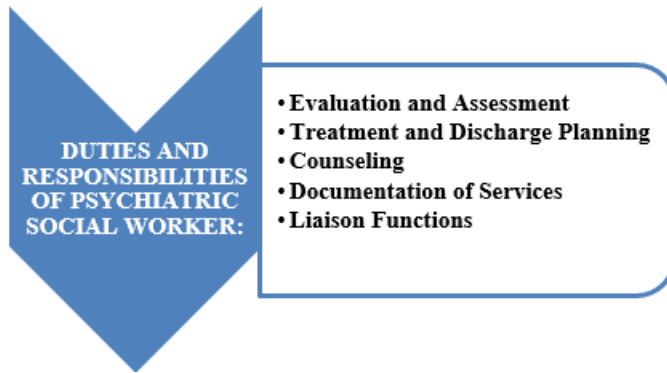
- In the year 1905 the social work profession emerged
- In 1917 the book 'Social Diagnoses' was written by Marry Richmond.
- Post world war - II, the concept of home visit was coined by Sir Jean Cabot.
- In India, Gauri Rani Banerjee, the trained social worker from US, started with a training programme in Medical & Psychiatric social worker at Tata Institute of Social Sciences, (TISS) Mumbai.
- Commencement of the post of Medical & Psychiatric social worker by various well established & well known private sector hospitals.

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- National Mental Health Programme - launched by Indian government in the year 1982.



The high source of pure & pious concern is a family. When you think on family, you visualize a loving dad, a papering mom, a caring sister & a naughty brother. All these characters bring a smile on face in crucial, stressed, anxious & many more states of life. The destination of care & concern is a family. A life is full of tension & stress when you are on the way to your professional cadre, but peace of family gives you the courage to overcome from that by enjoying your personal existence. Where there is no breakdown in any mean in family, the life goes smoothly, but when any dilemma accidentally enters in family, the ups & downs are the host. Any member of family with any mental illness is a breakdown in family. It is a speed breaker or a diversion in the happiness of the family.

Is mentally illness in family that much disturbing? What is this mental illness? When we talk on mental illness, the term, mental health needs to be understood. The both terms are interconnected but different form each other. In simple words, mental health means absence of symptoms of abnormality & mental illness means the presence of symptoms of normality. It further means that when the person is able to cope up with the challenges & able deal with daily life is under the court of mentally healthy & the person who is poor in this or not able to cope up is mentally ill. There are some features of mentally ill & mentally healthy person, let us have a look on it for more clarification & understanding.

### Mental Health & Mental Illness:

World Health Organization (WHO) defines mental health as 'a state of well - being in which the individual understands his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community'.<sup>3</sup>

Mental health is the aptitude of an individual, the group and the milieu to interact with one another in ways that promote subjective well - being, the optimal development and use of mental aptitudes (cognitive (thought), affective (emotions) and relational), the achievement of individual and collective goals consistent with justice and the attainment and preservation of conditions of fundamental equality.

Mental illness or disorder is that state of a person's mind wherein he or she is encountering thought disturbances, emotional disturbances and a disturbance in daily routines.

### Prevalence of Mental illness in India:

Depression attacks one in every five Indians in their lifetime (World Health Organization, 2015). Stigma associated with mental illness, a lack of awareness & limited access to professional help, only 10 - 12 % of these will seek help. Mental health workforce in India (per 100, 000 Population) is 0.3, 0.12, 0.7 & 0.07 for Psychiatrists, nurses, psychologists & for social workers respectively.

The Mental Health America (MHA) describes the following symptoms of mentally healthy person<sup>4</sup>:

- Bizarre thoughts & confused thought processing
- Chronic depression (More than 14 days)
- State of being happy & sad (Mood swings)
- Over worried & fearful
- Socially isolated behaviour & Lack of interest or over interest in eating and sleeping
- Aggressiveness
- Problems in routine tasks
- Suicidal tendencies

In contrast to the above stated lines, following are some of the signs of a mentally healthy person:

- High tolerance power & not short tempered
- Capacity to balance dilemmas by being patience
- Vitality - free from negative feelings
- Self - control, self - respect, sufficient self - esteem & self confidence
- Presence of feeling like love, care, affection, concern, gratitude, etc.
- Internal peace and harmony

### Social Work Intervention in Community (As an Organizer and Developer):

The word community has derived from the Latin word *communitas* which means shared in common. All of us are oriented on the typology of the community. Specifically, when we walk on role of social worker or place of social worker in community, it focuses on the developmental part. Out of total population, **68.84 %** people stay in rural, areas & 31.16 % people stay in urban areas. (Source: Census of India, 2011).<sup>5</sup>

When anyone glances the schemes designed by the government; the schemes for rural areas are more in number. The reason is density of the population in major regions of the society. Higher the numbers/population, more the problems are prone to develop. The study of Dhavaleshwar, C. (2016) clearly mentions the stand of social worker in community development. He points out following lines:

Social work is a vibrant profession. It implies the primary & secondary methods of social work for effectiveness. Community itself is a collage of many individuals, families, groups & other. By looking towards the methods of social work, as the community organization is dealing with individuals & groups. It applies social case work & group work. Murray Ross, (1955) states that it is all about to bring out the match between societal needs & resources available for dealing with special needs.<sup>6</sup>

His words specifically focus on the role of a mediator & several others listed down in Social work intervention in community setting:

#### **Social Worker in Community Setting:**

- Community organizer
- Case worker and Group Worker
- Facilitator and Mediator
- Counselor
- Information giver and seeker
- Need analyzer, etc.

#### **Outcome:**

- Emergence of a strong, vibrant, healthy & wealthy community
- The commencement of journey of transformation & empowerment
- Pioneering capacity of self - direction & self - governance among the community dwellers.<sup>7</sup>

The concerns of community mental health worker/community social worker:

The Community Mental Health worker provides home - based psychosocial rehabilitation services and crisis interventions for persons with serious mental illness. The major component of community mental health worker is clinical work. The next component is integration of care with the community through networking & the last component is providing training and support to the networking partners.<sup>8</sup>

- Health concerns: Birth weight, immunization, prenatal care, etc.
- Economic concerns: Poverty, unemployment, cost of living, etc.
- Educational concerns: School dropout ratio, student mobility, etc.
- Family concerns: Preschool participation, adolescence care, etc.

#### **Social Work Intervention in School**

Since the inception of universe, the social institution - education has its value in mankind. The almighty, king - queen, prince - princess all have undergone through the said institution. It is unbeatable fact that the education system, the laws & other morals of education have variety of changes from time to time. The age group, infrastructure, quality, syllabus, attitude to obeying, etc. have changed dramatically in Indian society.

We used to learn school as our second home or a temple type structure. In today's scenario that is a history or past. The changes have taken place in the conceptual framework of education today. There was no concept called school social worker in ancient time. The concept is of recent origin. One of the examples of adaptation of western culture by India is one of them. Every coin has two sides. This signifies that it has positive & negative impacts both.

The formal pattern of education is followed in school. The concept of school social worker was brought in the year 2006, on the 100<sup>th</sup> year's anniversary of social work profession. The more scope for social work professionals

have raised by being a school social worker. But the irony is that why the need for school social worker has emerged, for giving valuation in ethics, morals, general understanding for society? The question arises in ancient time the informal education was imparted by teachers themselves, there was no such description. As the time & generation have changed, the attitude, value system & many more parameters have changed. To match that with the society, school social worker is there.

If one look into the bright side of the scope, it is clear that the education system has now a specialized someone to look into informal matters of child development. There are various roles & responsibilities on the shoulder of school social worker. The major tasks of school social workers are consultation, assessment, direct intervention & assistance.<sup>9</sup>

As far as child's health is concerned, it is recommended that the school social worker can contribute significantly here to bring the academic, family and social life back on track (NASW, 2002).

The school social worker has a unique stand in an interdisciplinary team. Skills required to practice as a school social worker:

- Direct Practice: Individual counseling, Home visits, Group work, etc.
- Community Connection: Community mental health, court referrals, advocacy, mediation, etc.

The main role of school social worker is to enable students to function & learn in the school environment. The primary goal of school is to provide education & not the social services. That is why it is said for the school social workers that they do practice social work in secondary setting. Schools can be considered heaven in some cases & a horrible or places of dreaded spans & events. The heaven & hell experiences from child to child.<sup>10</sup>

#### **Impacts/ outcome:**

Intervention of school social worker in schools plays significant & remarkable role in today's trend. The outcome of school social worker is classified in several heads they are:

#### **Social & emotional issues:**

- Grief & loss
- Mental health issues
- Disability
- Lowered social inclusion
- Trauma, abuse, neglect, etc.
- Anti - social behavior

#### **Family issues:**

- Family poverty
- Family violence
- Child abuse & neglect
- Poor family relationships
- Style of parenting

#### **Schooling issues:**

- Home - school relationships

- Engagement
- Attendance
- Need for modification in terms of syllabus
- Learning environments

#### Contribution of school social worker:

- Specialist in knowledge, skills, techniques help children to come up with positivity
- Assistance to teachers by being the mediators
- Enriching the knowledge base & decision making for professional development

School social workers strive to uphold the rights of all children & young people to access an education (Article 28 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the child) and aim to remove barriers to learning in order to maximize engagement & opportunity.<sup>11</sup>

They are at the front of aiding schools, people and families address complex social issues and have the expert information and abilities important to ensure that understudies are associated and taken part in their learning. In the nutshell, it can be concluded that the school social workers have significant role in the education system & for the betterment of children & society as a whole.

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