Introduction of social work

Social work is a profession which deals with various problems and issues systematically and scientifically. It empowers individuals, groups and communities. It requires specific knowledge, skills and techniques to practice.

Social work is a problem solving profession that is committed to improve the quality of human life by imparting various intervention techniques and strategies which are scientifically proved and artistically applied. This chapter provides you an opportunity to discuss the importance of a professional approach towards problem solving process.

Definition of social work

According to Walter.A.Friedlander (1955), "Social work is a professional service based on scientific knowledge and skill in human relation, which assists the Specimen individuals alone or in groups, to obtain social and personal satisfaction and independence."

According to Indian Conference of Social work (1957), "social work is a welfare activity based on humanitarian philosophy, scientific knowledge and technical skills for helping the individual, group or community to live a rich and full life."

Scope and Objectives of Social Work

Social work is a professional and academic discipline that seeks to improve the quality of life and well being of an individual, group or community. Intervention at individual, group and community level is undertaken in social work. Relationship is the key tool of social work. It promotes study, diagnosis, research and resource mobilization. Social work simply means 'help people to help themselves'. We can introduce social work through the Chinese proverb "Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day; show him how to catch fish, and you feed him for a lifetime". This proverb means that equipping/preparing someone for a job is of greater benefit than a one-off hand out. Social work in its various forms addresses the multiple, complex transactions between people and their environments. Its mission is to enable all people to develop their full potential, enrich their lives, and prevent dysfunction. Professional social work is focused on problem solving and development. Social workers are agents of change in society and in the lives of individuals, families and communities they serve. Social work is an interrelated system of theory and practice.

A. Scope of Social Work

The scope and relevance of social work is growing tremendously in the present scenario due to the complexity of the modern world. The result of modernization requires reshuffling to meet the needs of the changing world. This social responsibility is vested in

the profession of social work, which is equipped to meet the demands of the ever changing situations. It has its own techniques, tools and a strong theoretical back ground to support it. In the present context, social work profession become more relevant.

Professional social workers practice in a variety of settings; including

1. case management,
2. medical and psychiatric social work,
3. counseling,
4. family and child welfare,
5. youth welfare,
6. welfare of the weaker section,
7. grass root advocacy organizations,
8. community health agencies,
9. management agencies, police departments,
10. correctional agency settings,
11. community development setting, teaching, school setting,
12. social welfare agency setting,
13. industrial agency setting,
14. gernotological settings and environmental issues,
15. crisis intervention etc.

Career opportunities for social workers are increasing day by day at national and international level. Some of the national and international level opportunities of the social workers are listed below. NACO (National Aids Control Organization), CAPART (Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology), CSWB (Central Social Welfare Board), CRY (Child Relief and You), Child line, MINDS Foundation – Treating mental illness in India, and Oxfam India. These offer wide job opportunities within India. UNICEF (United Nations International Children Emergency Fund), WHO (World Health Organiation), ILO (International Labour Organization), Oxfam, Ford Foundation, Action Aid, CARE (Co operative America Relief Everywhere), DESH (Deepam Educational Society for Health), DFID (Department for International Development), World Vision, The Oak Tree Foundation, SOS (Save Our Souls), Help Age International, etc. are offering tremendous opportunities for social workers abroad.

B. Characteristics of Social Work

The main characteristics of social work are: i. social work is a welfare activity based on humanitarian philosophy.

 ii. it respects the worth and dignity of individuals.

iii. it is a professional activity.

iv. it assists individuals, groups and communities to become self reliant and inter dependent.

v. it promotes adaptability of individuals to social functioning.

vi. social work has a strong scientific base. vii. it is closely related to psychology and sociology.

viii. it is an activity that helps to cope with problems.

ix. it requires specific knowledg, skills acquired through formal training.

x. it is remunerative.

C. Objectives of Social Work

Objectives are statements of what we are trying to do. Generally, social work has the following objectives

i. solve psycho-social problems.

ii. fulfil humanitarian needs.

iii. help to resolve with adjustmental problems.

iv. create self sufficiency.

v. strengthen harmonious social relations.

vi. make provision for corrective, preventive and rehabilitative services.

vii. conscientise the community.

viii. change the environment in favour of individual's growth and development

. ix. ensure social justice and democratic functioning.

x. enhances self esteem.

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