

## UNIT-II

### **Historical Development of Social Work**

Social work has developed through centuries like any other discipline. This discipline attained a professional status very recently. It was developed through the practice of charity, social service, welfare measures, etc. Here we can go through the evolution of social work in the United Kingdom (UK), the United States of America (USA) and in India.

#### **A. The evolution of social work in the United Kingdom**

The need to help other people is stressed by the major religions. During the Elizabethan period the needy people were helped by the authorities. Such charity works are called 'relief of the paupers'. The Victorian reformers who were distressed by poverty, child neglect and other social ills were pioneers in many of today's social welfare services, although they too had called such services by various other names such as organized charity or philanthropic work or 'relief of destitution'. The history of social work in the UK had gone through various phases

##### **a. A.D 1200 to 1500**

From the beginning of religion the priests assumed leadership in providing protection for the helpless widows, orphans and the sick. Charity was promoted primarily by the desire to receive the grace of God to secure the merits of good deeds for eternal life. In the beginning of the 14th century the poor were divided into two categories; able-bodied and destitutes.

##### **b. A.D 1501 to 1600**

Citizens were discouraged from giving alms to the able-bodied beggars. In 1531 Henry VI issued license for begging in restricted areas; punishment was given to those who violated the law - In 1572, Queen Elizabeth introduced general tax for the protection of the poor and appointed overseers of the poor. Thus the government was held responsible for the maintenance of the poor. The church, especially monasteries played the role of relief centres to the destitute and the disabled. Alms were collected and distributed by the parish and other clergymen

who knew the individual and his situation. The churches did not make any effort to provide any permanent remedy for improving the conditions of the poor. Later the responsibility was shifted from the church to the Government.

### **c. A.D 1600 to 1800**

Elizabethan Poor Law introduced in 1601 was a landmark in the history of organized social welfare. This law ensured many relief provisions for the eligible poor. The law also insisted the able bodied beggars to work in 'work houses'. The poor were divided into three categories: able bodied, impotent poor and the dependent child. The overseers of the poor were responsible for the execution of the poor law. They verified eligibility and selected the applicants. The work house act passed in 1692 made provisions for the training of the inmates of work houses.

The table given below shows the classification of poor based on Elizabethan Poor Law.

Type	Able bodied poor	impotent poor	Dependent child	Criteria
Forced to work in the house of corrections or in the work house, not eligible to receive alms.	Unable to work and placed in alm houses (sick, old, blind, deaf etc.)	Orphans, the deserted, children from very poor families.		

### **d. A.D.1800 to 1900**

In this period social scientist Adam Smith stated that government should minimize its involvement in any field for any purpose as it will lead to much dependency. Malthus is of the opinion that 'if there were a lot of free services, this will lead to the desire for more children'. So he recommended an end to the charity work. As per the recommendations of the Royal commission (1832) able bodied continued to work in able bodied homes and better help for slum dwellers were provided in 1834. In the Factories Act (1833) only minimum welfare facilities were provided to the industrial workers.

### **Formation of Charity Organization Societies**

The formation of charity organization society was an important milestone in the development of charity programmes. London Charity Organization Society was the first such organization formed in the year 1869.

They undertook the following strategies to help the needy effectively.

- i. stopped giving doles.
- ii. co-ordinated the distribution of relief.
- iii. verified each application carefully.
- iv. conducted interviews to assess the genuineness of the applicants
- . v. formulated plans for the treatments.

### **Settlement House Movement**

Cannon Samuel Augustus Barnett founded University Settlement House which was named as Toynbee Hall. Its objectives were: i. Educational and cultural development of the poor. ii. Imparting information to the poor for their improvement. iii. Developing consciousness towards health problems and the need for enacting legislation.

### **e. A.D 1900 onwards**

Newly formed Charity Organisation Societies (COS) started to practise professional social work and began to provide training to social workers. In the year 1899 Social work training was started and introduced. At first two years training programme in social work with theory and practice was started. The table below shows the important legislations enacted to standardize the social welfare schemes of UK.

Year	Laws	Purpose
1905	Poor Law Commission	Pensions for the aged and unemployed, Public employment services
1906	Meals Act	Providing free meals
1907	Education Act	Free medical examination of school children.
1911	National Insurance Act	Compulsory health insurance to the

		workers who belong to the lower income groups.
1925	Old Age Contributory Act	Old age pension
1941	Beveridge Commission	Social Insurance, Public assistance, Children's allowance etc
1944	Disabled Persons (Employment) Act	Employ the disabled persons in commercial or industrial enterprises.

## **B. History of Social Work in the USA**

The earliest forms of social work activities were started in the USA from time immemorial. The history of social work in the USA can be divided into the following stages.

- i. The Colonial Period (1620-1776)
- ii. Civil War and Industrial Revolutions (1776-1860)
- iii. The Industrialization -The human side (1860-1900)
- iv. Social work, seeking professional characteristics (1900-1930)
- v. Highly professionalized discipline (1930-onwards)

### **Charity Organization Societies (COS)**

The charity organization society movement was started in the USA at Buffalo in 1877. The New York Charity Organization Society made revolution in the field of organized charity work within 15 years by extending its activities to 92

American cities. The Scientific charity approach enabled Charity Organization Societies (COS) to understand and take care of family problems. The charity organization societies started in Boston and Philadelphia in 1878 operated on the following principles: i. Detailed investigation on applications for charity ii. A central system of registration to avoid duplication iii. Co-operation between various relief agencies. iv. Extensive use of voluntary friendly visitors.

### **Settlement House Movement**

Rapid urbanization, industrialization and immigration produced social settlement movement in the USA. This movement combined social advocacy and social service with proper intervention through group work and neighborhood organization strategies. The settlement house workers established neighborhood centres and offered services such as citizenship training, adult education, counselling, recreation and daycare. The social group work, social action and community organization methods have emerged from Settlement House Movement.

### **Child Welfare Movement**

The rapid growth of manufacturing industries aggravated the pathetic condition of children, so Children Aid Society (1853) and Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (1857) were started in New York City. This led to the formation of Child Welfare Movement. The aim of the agencies was to rescue children from inadequate homes and from the streets

### **Development of Professional Social Work Education in the USA**

The employment of paid staff and their training by Charity Organization Societies (COS) facilitated a shift from the unorganized charity and social service to the beginning of an organized and systematic social work. The first such training centre organized by New York Charity Organization Society (NYCOS) in 1898 is currently known as the Columbia University. Hospital based training and social work services were also initiated around the same time at Boston Hospital. The First World War increased the casualties among the poor, consequently various wartime charity programmes were initiated and Welfare Acts were passed.

World War I provided unique opportunities for social case workers to prove the necessity of their skills. Thus the prestige of social work rose up in war related activities such as the Red Cross home services. Mary E Richmond could be considered the first professional social worker in the US. She became the assistant treasurer of Baltimore Charity Organization Society. Later on she became practitioner, teacher and theoretician of the Charity Organization Movement. In the National Conference on Charities and Corrections held at Toronto, she advocated the establishment of training schools for professional social workers (1897). The other group of social workers like Hane Addams, Florance Kelly, Edith argued for bringing of legislation to improve the working conditions of neighbourhood organizations. The book 'Social Diagnosis' by Mary Richmond in 1917 is considered as the foundation for the theoretical basis of social work .Chicago School and Boston school formed the second and third schools of social work in the USA respectively. The American Association of Schools of Social Work was founded in 1919 to facilitate communication among the schools.

### **C. Evolution of Social Work in India**

The systematic development of social work in India may be grouped into different periods.

### **a. Social Reforms in Ancient Period (2500 BC-AD 1200)**

In ancient India, the nature of social service was that of charity. The earliest reference to charity is to be found in the Rig Veda (Chap1 XIII, 2) which encourages charity by saying "May the one who gives, shine the most". Upanishad prescribed that every house holder must practise charity. In ancient India social welfare activities were performed by Yagnas. Each one contributed his bit towards the Yagnas. The intention was the welfare of all.

Yagnashalas were classrooms where men and women were taught the spirit of working together. Bhagavat Gita insists that the privileged class has a moral duty to serve the poor. Such persons who served the society with all their ability were free from all sins. But those who cooked for themselves or produced for their own gain were eating sin (Gita chap-3-13)

According to Manu it was his duty to feed his guests first, then his servant, he and his wife might eat last of all. Charity or dana became the instrument of virtue of the privileged sections and it was to be dispensed voluntarily. Later in the Vedic period dana became institutionalized and came to be associated with religious ideology. Dana was given to acquire punya (merit). Kautilya highlights the duties of the king towards the welfare and happiness of his subjects, "In the happiness of the subjects lies the king's happiness.

" The evolution of Buddhism influenced the character of the Indian society- from the tribal agricultural settlement to a class based agrarian economy. Buddhism laid great emphasis on punya and dana (charity). Guilds were important corporate organizations which performed a variety of economic and welfare functions during Buddhist period. Guilds provided social security to the oppressed class of the society. Bimbisara paid special attention to the development of roads and agriculture.

Ashoka developed a comprehensive system of social welfare. He appointed a superintendent to look after the welfare of women. The welfare programmes

were under the overall charge of High Commissioners of Charity (Dharma mahamathras). Many reforms were introduced in the field of women's welfare, rehabilitation of prisoners, rural development, free medical care, regulation of prostitution and provisions of public utilities like roads, wells, rest houses for travellers etc

Kanishka gave liberal donation and grant for the construction of Buddhist Viharas, monasteries, stupas etc. These were the centres of learning and help to the needy people. During the Gupta period some more welfare activities executed. Harsha Vardhana was an enlightened ruler who established hospitals, dispensaries, orphanages and homes for the destitutes.

### **b. Social Reform in Medieval Period**

The duties of a King included the maintenance of peace, protection from external attack and to provide justice. Malik Ali, a noble of Balban, was more generous in giving alms. GiyasUdheen Thuglak was charitable and King Muhammad Gavan spent all his wealth on the poor and led a simple life. Humayun was the first king who made a bold attempt to prohibit sati. Akbar was a great ruler who brought about many reforms in Indian society and abolished slavery in 1583. He maintained a policy of religious equality and granted full freedom to his subjects on religious matters. Aurangzeb looked after the welfare of his people and led a very simple life.

### **c. Social Reform in Modern Period**

Identify these eminent reformers Rajaram Mohan Roy was the greatest Indian of the 19th century. He was the morning star of Indian renaissance who sowed the seeds of religious and social reforms. He used his power and influence towards the abolition of sati and he was in favour of widow remarriage and female education. Iswarchandra Vidya Sagar advocated widow remarriage, economic self-reliance, women's education and prohibition of polygamy. It was with the joint effort of Mohan Roy and Vidyasagar that the Widow Remarriage Act was passed in 1856. Professor Bal Shastri Jain Bhaker of Bombay fought against the evil customs like sati, female infanticide etc. and tried to frame laws to abolish these customs. Gopal Hari Desh Mukh of Bombay promoted modern education,



established dispensaries, maternity homes, orphanages etc. Sasipade Banerjee was a notable reformer of Bengal who worked for the cause of women's education and widow remarriage. He arranged several marriages of widows and gave shelter to widows at his residence. Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan played a prominent role for the education of women and to wipe out social evils among the Muslims.

Gandhiji became active in political as well as social fields in 1920. He symbolized the integration of political reform with social reform. He worked for the upliftment of women, dalits and fought for the equality between men and women. He emphasized the need for freedom from evils along with political independence. The contribution of Gandhiji like Sarvodaya, Andhyodaya, Non violence struggle, Panchyathiraj are closely related with the philosophies of social work.

**Contributions of Organizations** The important organizations like Brahma Samaj, Prarthana Samaj, Arya Samaj, Theosophical Society, Ramakrishna Mission, Muhammedan Anglo Oriental Society, etc. played significant role in the development of social work. Brahma Samaj was founded by Rajaram Mohan Roy and worked for the abolition of Sati, promotion of widow remarriage and for women's welfare. Arya Samaj was founded by Swamy Dayananda Saraswathy in 1875. He opposed the caste system and child marriage. Muhammedan Anglo Oriental Society was founded by Sir Sayyid Ahammed Khan. Theosophical society was founded in 1881 in Madras by Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott. Ramakrishna Mission founded by Swami Vivekananda in 1897 started its programmes with education, treatment and general help. Gopal Krishna Gokhale established the Servants of India Society for social service.

### Modern Social Work

Modern social work was introduced in India by Christian Missionaries in the beginning of the 19 century. When they started making houses for orphans and destitutes, Indian social reformers like Sasipada Banerjee, Phule and Karve too started homes for the widows. Some social and religious associations like Arya

Samaj, Prarthana Samaj and Ramakrishna Mission played significant roles in providing institutional welfare service in India.

### **Social Work Education in India**

The formal training in social work was started in India in 1936 at Dhorabji Tata School of Social Work at Mumbai. Now it is a deemed university named Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS).

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