UNIT 3: HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

UNIT STRUCTURE

3.1. Learning objective
3.2. Introduction
3.3. Historical Development of Social Work
3.4. Professional Development of Social Work in USA
3.5. Professional Development of Social Work in UK
3.6. Professional Development of Social Work in India
3.7. Development of Social Work Education in India
3.8. Professionalization of Social Work
3.9. Basic Values of Social Work
3.10. Philosophy of Social Work
3.11. Let Us Sum Up
3.12. References
3.13. Answers to Check your Progress
3.14. Model Questions

3.1. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- understand the historical milestones in the development of social work in USA,UK & India
- familiarize with the historical development of social work education in India
- identify the basic components of a profession with specific reference to social work as a profession.
- internalize the primary social work values
- understand the guiding philosophy of social work

3.2. INTRODUCTION

The discipline of social work has a long history of evolution from charity - based tradition to the autonomous profession of today. The concern of professionalizing and acadamizing social work across the globe became a significant issue in the beginning of the twentieth century in the west including Europe and the U.S.A From the west, social work as a professional discipline has spread over the world. Social work has indeed a rich history in micro and macro practice that addresses individual and community needs as well as confronts their root causes by challenging systems, institutions, and policies that keep oppression/privilege intact.

3.3. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

Social work. much like other disciplines has developed through centuries. This discipline attained a professional status very recently. It was developed through the practice of charity, social service and welfare measures. Today social work has travelled a long way from welfare to empowerment and development and the present emphasis of the profession is protecting and promoting people's rights. In this unit, we review the histories of social work development with emphasis on USA, UK and India.

3.4. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL WORK IN USA

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 historical development in USA can be divided into the following stages:

- The colonial period (1620-1776)
- Civil war and industrial revolution (1776-1860)
- Industrialism -the human side(1860-1900)
- Social work seeking professional characteristics (1900-1930)
- Highly professionalized discipline.(1930)

The development of social work in the United States reflects an ongoing synthesis of ideas derived from many different cultures. Social welfare services have indeed existed in USA since the establishment of the original thirteen colonies on the eastern board. The English people, who settled here, brought with them their customs, laws and ideas. Elizabethan poor law served as the basic pattern for extending financial assistance to persons in need. Assistance to the poor in their homes (outdoor relief) was the initial method followed in the growing colonial towns.

The Civil War stimulated the emergence of large-scale private social welfare initiatives, such as the US Sanitary Commission and the Red Cross. In the War's aftermath, the short-lived Freedmen's Bureau (the first Federal social welfare program) provided assistance to newly emancipated slaves. State boards of charity arose to improve the management of institutions constructed during the previous generation. In the half century after the Civil War, rapid industrial expansion produced a dramatic increase in individual and community needs. The most notable social changes of this period included a series of economic depressions (known then as "panics") and their consequences; new manifestations of racism following the end of Reconstruction in 1876; and a dramatic increase in immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe.



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Using concepts derived from business and industry, reformers attempted to respond to some of these developments by regulating public relief distribution through so-called "scientific charity." In 1877, the first American **Charity Organization Society** (COS) based on such principles was founded in Buffalo, New York. The main functions of the COS were three fold - (i) the rehabilitation of families which for any reason fail to be self sufficient; (ii) the education of the community; and (iii) aid in the

elimination of the causes of poverty.

Another development was in regard to **Settlement houses**. 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 neighbourhood organization strategies. The settlement house workers established neighbourhood 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 Jane 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 which reflected a different type of organizational response to the impact of industrialization and immigration and introduced an alternative model of social service agency, a form of urban mission. The first US settlement, the Neighborhood Guild in New York City, was established in 1886. Three years later, Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr founded Hull House in Chicago, which became the most famous American settlement.

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3.5. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL WORK IN UK

The history of social work in the United Kingdom had gone through various phases. They are:

- **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 the14th century, the poor were divided into two categories; able-bodied and destitute.
- **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.

- **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.
- **A.D.1800 to 1900** - Social scientist Adam Smith recommended that government should minimize its involvement in any field for any purpose as it will lead to much dependency. There was a popular notion that free services would lead to the desire to have more children. Hence a recommendation to end charity work was put forth. 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. 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.
- Stopped giving doles.
- Co-ordinate the distribution of relief.
- Verified each application carefully.

- Conducted interviews to assess the genuineness of the applicants.
- Formulated plans for the treatments.

Settlement House Movement - Another significant milestone in the history of social work was the establishment of Settlement House by Cannon Samuel Augustus Barnet in 1884. The University Settlement House was named as Toynbee Hall. Its objectives were:

- Educational and cultural development of the poor.
- Imparting information to the poor for their improvement.
- Developing consciousness towards health problems and the need for enacting legislation.
- **A.D 1900 onwards:** With the increasing growth of voluntary institutions, the need to have trained workers was felt. This need lead to the birth of social work education. In 1873, Octavia Hill started training workers for imparting service. Newly formed Charity Organization Societies (COS) started to practice professional social work and began to provide training to social workers. In the year 1899, social work training was started and introduced. In 1903, the School of Sociology in London started to impart two years training programme in social work with theory and practice. This was the first effort to professionalize social work service.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 1

1. Write the main objective of Elizabethan Poor Law.
2. State the child welfare initiative in the USA

3.6. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL WORK IN INDIA

In India, social work profession began very late and its progress has been neither rapid nor smooth. Hence its professional aspect has not been fully recognized. Historically, the tradition of giving assistance to poor,



Social reforms came up to indicate social evils in Indian society. Raja Ram Mohan Roy started the Brahma Samaj; Swami Dayanand Saraswati started the Arya Samaj; Swami Vivekanand established Ramakrishna Mission and Annie Besant started home rule movement against Britishers.

disabled and destitute is very old in India. The development of social work in India can be grouped as:

3.6.1. Pre- British Period to 1800 A.D

Serving the fellow humans is an integral part of Indian culture. Though riddled with feudal ideology and caste system the Indian society looked after the needs of others when required. The community and rulers laid emphasis on taking responsibility of those in need. The Hindu scriptures have always propagated social justice, responsibility and welfare. This is evident in the Vedic and post Vedic periods. Advent of other religions like Buddhism, Jainism, Islam and Christianity had also strengthened the existing philanthropic Indian philosophy.

The following social structures fulfilled certain responsibilities:

Joint family:- It is like a trust sharing common property. It protected the aged, children and women and people with disability and served as a social trust.

Village community:- Indian villages were independent in matters of food, clothing and shelter. The whole community used to take care of each other.

Village temple:- In every village, there were temples. People donated money to the temple and under this system, socially backward people were protected. Dharamsalas attached to temples also played a role in charity work.

3.6.2. During the British Period:

Before the advent of the British, Indians practically lived in villages. Thus the economy of the village was self-sufficient. But under the British rule, India was seen as an agrarian country. Only industries were allowed to develop which provided better opportunities for the investment of British capital. Further, the British rules menaced the organization of production. These economic and organizational changes brought down the economic condition of Indians. All the problems were chiefly related with health, housing, children and women welfare and labour, recreation, crime and social disorganization. Due to these problems, the need for organized social

work was realized. British rule was main inspiration for social reform movement. Christian missionaries spread education, brought the theory of equality, which in turn helped the social reforms to attack the evil customs and inequality. There were no property rights for Indian women. Early marriage, inequality, caste system, widow remarriage, custom of Sati was the burning problems of Indian Society. Many social reforms came up to indicate these social evils. Raja Ram Mohan Roy started the Brahma Samaj; Swami Dayanand Saraswati started the Arya Samaj; Swami Vivekanand established Ramakrishna Mission and Annie Besant started home rule movement against Britishers. They were rendering social welfare services to the needy people. Later Gandhi did a lot of work in the field of social reform. Due to the impact of the western education, and Christian missionaries, a new term of social work began in India. It was based on the idea of democracy and humanitarianism. Organizations like the Theosophical Society contributed towards awakening of individual rights. Awareness on women's rights, writings and developments in the field of psychology, sociology and anthropology helped identify individual needs, concepts of ill health and mental illness. These developments gave an impetus to human service.

Growth of professional training in India: In India, professional social work is of recent origin. During 1900 onwards, those who were engaged in social welfare activities found the need of trained social workers. Thus, in the year 1905, the revolts of the Indian society started. Then the emergency of Mahatma Gandhi and the rise of Sarvodaya Movement in 1915 made lot of constructive work in Indian politics. But these Gandhian social workers were not trained and it was not professional social work. In India, professional social work owes its origin to a short-term training course on social service organized by the social service league at Bombay. Till that time, social workers (Volunteers) did not get any remuneration or salary. It was simply a social service to the needy people guided by the principle of humanity. Later, the first School of Social Work was started in 1936 by Clifford Marshal, who was a protestant missionary and worked in Nagpada. He came to India in 1925 and felt the need of trained social workers. He

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established the Sir Dorabji Tata School of Social Sciences in Bombay which offered professional training in social work. The appointed workers were not professional workers and they were only Gandhians. Later on, different Schools of Social Work came into existence in Delhi, Calcutta, Lucknow, Varanasi, Baroda, Agra, Udaipur etc., which imparted professional training in social work service.

3.6.3. After independence:

In Independent India, the source of all welfare service are inherent in the constitution. In order to supervise the social welfare services, the Central Social Welfare Board had been established. The Board assisted in the improvement and development of social welfare activities Thus, Indian social work gradually emerged as a social oriented profession. Social work has come a long way to become an important profession in the modern society. The scope of responsibilities of social work has become wider over the years, and social workers require more extensive training to perform their duties effectively.

3.7. DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION IN INDIA

Social work education has already completed six decades of existence in India. Looking back at the evolution of the profession, it began in India in response to a felt need for a scientific method for helping people. The idea of establishing an educational institution for social work was first mooted by a westerner and hence social work education in India right from its origin could never claim to be indigenous. The major objective behind the establishment of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Bombay in 1936 was to train manpower to work in Indian conditions. Gauri Rani Banerjee was one of the pioneers of professional social work in India. After the establishment of TISS, it remained the only institute of scial work for almost a decade. In the subsequent years, many others came up, with the sixties witnessing a spurt of several institutions. At present, a number of universities and institutions offer graduate, post graduate, M. Phil and Ph.

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D level training in social work. The introduction of social work at higher secondary level resulted in many changes in the field of social work training and practice. In a developing country like India, social workers have a major role in the socio-economic, cultural, health and other related areas.

3.8. PROFESSIONALIZATION OF SOCIAL WORK

'Professionalization' is basically a socialization process by which an individual is drawn into the institutional context of particular occupation. Today, like any other helping professions, social work has a set of philosophical assumptions and beliefs, a collection of theories and principles, a well classified taxonomy of concepts, and systematic method for studying, diagnosing and treating the problems faced by the clients. More than anything else, professional social work today has a well defined and refined body of eclectic knowledge drawn from such disciplines as sociology, psychology, economics etc. The following discussion is an attempt to provide an understanding of the various components and dimensions of the profession.

In developing a conceptual framework for understanding the profession, professional social work can be regarded as consisting of five inter-related segments viz., 1) professional process 2) professional participants 3) professional methodology 4) professional inputs and 5) professional milieu. Following is a discussion of each of these segments:

3.8.1. Professional process:

The mission of social work profession is to help individuals, groups and communities help themselves when faced with problems arising out of the hard realities of life. In carrying out this mission, the social worker first tries to analyse the problem and locate its causal roots. Once the client's inadequacies and environmental limitations are identified, the social worker proceeds to look into the positive elements in the client and the environment that can be utilized for solving the problem. In arriving at the appropriate solution, the client is encouraged by the social worker to try a series of problem solving exercises, at the end of which the right alternative is discovered and the problem is solved.

3.8.2. Professional participants:

The helping process portrayed earlier in this section is no simplistic task. In fact, it has to be undertaken on a highly professional level and hence the success and effectiveness of the process depends to a large extent on the profile and characteristics of the professional participants who partake in the process. In the professional social work practice, the main participants are - i) the client system with a problem ii) the social worker with his or her level of professional learning and expertise iii) the social work agency with its resources and limitations and iv) the environment of the client with its resources and liabilities.

3.8.3. Professional methodology:

Social work methodology comprises of study, diagnosis and treatment.

Social work methodology comprises of study, diagnosis and treatment. When a client comes to a social worker, the first thing the latter does is studying the problem thoroughly. In this phase, the focus is on fact-finding and analysis of the problem without jumping into any conclusions. The next phase is the diagnosis phase when the factors both within the client and in the environment, responsible for causing the problem are identified. Treatment is the last phase of the professional methodology of social work. It consists of application of the tools and techniques of social work through which the social worker endeavours to bring about an appropriate adjustment between the client and his environment.

3.8.4. Professional inputs:

The professional inputs refer to the profession related characteristics and acquisitions of the social worker. These inputs include; the professional values and assumptions of social work, the guiding principles of social work practice, the professional relationship between social worker and client and the interdisciplinary body of social work knowledge.

3.8.5. Professional milieu:

The professional milieu of the helping process in social work comprises of the micro and macro environments in which the entire process occurs.

The micro environment is provided by the social work agency which organizes and provides the social work services. The macro component of the professional milieu of social work is the socio cultural context in which the helping process occurs.

As we understand the various segments, it is also essential to introspect on the professional traits in social work. These include:

- **Systematic and scientific knowledge:** Social work is based on scientific knowledge. Social work bases its methodology on a systematic body of evidence-based knowledge derived from research and practice evaluation, including local and indigenous knowledge specific to its context.
- **Skills, techniques and tools:** Social work addresses the barriers, inequalities and injustices that exist in society. It responds to crises and emergencies as well as to everyday personal and social problems. Social work utilizes a variety of skills, techniques and tools consistent with its holistic focus on persons and their environments.
- **Social work education:** Social work has a separate identity in the realm of education. In most of the countries there are provisions for graduate and post graduate level of education in the universities and other teaching institutions.
- **Professional organizations:** There are a number of professional organizations at the international and national levels.
- **Social approval:** Social work as a profession has been accepted by the respective governments. Both governmental and non-governmental organizations employ trained social workers on various posts.
- **Code of ethics:** A social worker functions in terms of certain basic assumptions. He gives respect to each client and believes in his creative power. He has full faith in the client's freedom of expression and self judgment. He always operates on the democratic principles

and values. He does not believe in any type of discrimination on the basis of caste, creed, religion etc.

Thus it can be said that social work is a profession because it consists of all the essential characteristics of a profession.

3.9. BASIC VALUES OF SOCIAL WORK

Values are beliefs about what is good and desirable. It is defined as a conception of a standard, cultural or merely personal, by which things are compared and approved or disapproved in relation to one another, held to be relatively desirable or undesirable, more meritorious or less, more or less correct. The profession of social work is grounded in a value system that focuses on social justice and fairness. Following are the core values of social work:

i. Respect individuals' worth and dignity, encourage mutual participation, demonstrate acceptance, uphold confidentiality, express honesty and handle conflict responsibly.
ii. Encourage individuals' active participation in the helping relationship and uphold their right to make their own decisions.
iii. Assist clients in securing resources needed to enhance their social functioning.
iv. Ensure that social institutions are humane and responsive to human needs.
v. Accept and appreciate diverse populations.
vi. Hold themselves accountable for ethical conduct, quality of their work and continuous professional development.

3.10. PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL WORK

Philosophy is the beliefs and principles underlying any department of knowledge. It is the study of truths and principles of being, knowledge, or conduct. A belief (or system of beliefs) accepted as authoritative by some group or school. Thus it is clear that the concept of philosophy is grounded

in the understanding that there are truths and principles of our existence and that these truths are accepted by us as well as others. We can have a set of truths and principles that guide us in how we conduct ourselves and define what we expect from others.

The concept of philosophy is grounded in the understanding that there are truths and principles of our existence and that these truths are accepted by us as well as others.

The philosophy of social work is based on humanitarism, liberalism and democracy. Except from devotion to welfare of human beings, social worker has to find a method of enabling those who are assisted to regain their confidence in themselves for the proper adjustment to normal life. The introduction of the concept and philosophy of democracy further strengthened the need to recognize every human being as an individual, worthy of respect and recognition, the individual being given the rights as well as responsibilities of an equal citizen in a democratic society. The consent of the governed, rule of the majority, respect for the creative minority, and freedom of assembly, speech and religion supported the development of the individual in his own right. Underlying these factors lay the philosophy of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. It is in the background of this hy of life that the methods of social work have been developed by titioners.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 2

3. What is micro and macro component of professional milleav?

4. Describe 'philosophy'



3.11. LET US SUM UP

- Social work has indeed a rich history in micro and macro practice that addresses individual and community needs as well as confronts their root causes by challenging systems, institutions, and policies that keep oppression/privilege intact.
- The first US settlement, the Neighborhood Guild in New York City, was established in 1886.

- Elizabethan Poor Law introduced in 1601 was a landmark in the history of organized social welfare.
- 'Professionalization' is basically a socialization process by which an individual is drawn into the institutional context of particular occupation.
- Values are beliefs about what is good and desirable.
- The philosophy of social work is based on humanitarism, liberalism and democracy.
- The introduction of the concept and philosophy of democracy further strengthened the need to recognize every human being as an individual, worthy of respect and recognition, the individual being given the rights as well as responsibilities of an equal citizen in a democratic society.

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3.13 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. The micro environment is provided by the social work agency which organizes and provides the social work services. The macro component of the professional milieu of social work is the socio cultural context in which the helping process occurs.

4. The concept of philosophy is grounded in the understanding that there are truths and principles of our existence and that these truths are accepted by us as well as others. We can have a set of truths and principles that guide us in how we conduct ourselves and define what we expect from others.



3.14 MODEL QUESTIONS

1. What is COS?
2. State the core values of social work.
3. Discuss the historical evolution of social work in UK.
4. Describe the process of professionalization of social work in India.
5. Highlight the development of social work education in India.
6. Analyze the main philosophy of social work.

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