Unit 4: CODE OF ETHICS

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4.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- Discuss the code of ethics in social work profession
- Explain the concept of marginalization in context to vulnerable groups
- Analyze the limitation of professional social work
- Describe the functions of various professional social workers associations in India and abroad.

4.2 INTRODUCTION

Social work differs from the various social sciences in that it is a profession. All professions can be viewed as social systems. Because the social work profession is a system within which every social worker functions, whether it is recognized or not, every social worker ought to understand its ameliorative and creative function in society. In India, NAPSWI

(National Association of Social Workers in India) is currently engaged in developing Code of Ethics for professional social workers in India. In this section we will discuss the code of ethics given by NASW.

4.3 CODE OF ETHICS IN SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION



The Code of Ethics was first developed by National Association of Social Workers (NASW). The NASW Code of Ethics is intended to serve as a guide to the everyday professional conduct of social workers.

Social work is a professional activity. Implicit in its practice are ethical principles which prescribes the professional responsibility of the social worker. The primary objective of the code of ethics is to make these implicit principles explicit for the protection of client and other members of society. (BASW). The code of ethics was first developed by National Association of Social Workers (NASW). The NASW Code of Ethics is intended to serve as a guide to the everyday professional conduct of social workers. This Code includes four sections. The first Section, "Preamble," summarizes the social work profession's mission and core values. The second section, "Purpose of the NASW Code of Ethics," provides an overview of the Code's main functions and a brief guide for dealing with ethical issues or dilemmas in social work practice. The third section, "Ethical Principles," presents broad ethical principles, based on social work's core values that inform social work practice. The final section, "Ethical Standards," includes specific ethical standards to guide social workers' conduct and to provide a basis for adjudication.

4.3.1 Preamble

The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. A historic and defining feature of social work is the profession's focus on individual well-being in a social context and the well-being of society. Fundamental to social work is attention to the environmental forces that create, contribute to, and address problems in living.

Social workers promote social justice and social change with and on behalf of clients. "Clients" is used inclusively to refer to individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are sensitive to cultural and ethnic diversity and strive to end discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustice. These activities may be in the form of direct practice, community organizing, supervision, consultation administration, advocacy, social and political action, policy development and implementation, education, and research and evaluation. Social workers seek to enhance the capacity of people to address their own needs. Social workers also seek to promote the responsiveness of organizations, communities, and other social institutions to individuals' needs and social problems.

The mission of the social work profession is rooted in a set of core values. These core values, embraced by social workers throughout the profession's history, are the foundation of social work's unique purpose and perspective:

- service
- social justice
- dignity and worth of the person
- importance of human relationships
- integrity
- competence

This constellation of core values reflects what is unique to the social work profession. Core values, and the principles that flow from them, must be balanced within the context and complexity of the human experience.

4.3.2 Purpose of The NASW Code of Ethics

Professional ethics are at the core of social work. The profession has an obligation to articulate its basic values, ethical principles, and ethical standards. The NASW Code of Ethics sets forth these values, principles, and standards to guide social workers' conduct. The Code is relevant to all social workers and social work students, regardless of their professional functions, the settings in which they work, or the populations they serve.

The NASW Code of Ethics serves six purposes:

1. The Code identifies core values on which social work's mission is based.
2. The Code summarizes broad ethical principles that reflect the profession's core values and establishes a set of specific ethical standards that should be used to guide social work practice.
3. The Code is designed to help social workers identify relevant considerations when professional obligations conflict or ethical uncertainties arise.
4. The Code provides ethical standards to which the general public can hold the social work profession accountable.
5. The Code socializes practitioners new to the field to social work's mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards.
6. The Code articulates standards that the social work profession itself can use to assess whether social workers have engaged in unethical conduct. NASW has formal procedures to adjudicate ethics complaints filed against its members
7. The Code offers a set of values, principles, and standards to guide decision making and conduct when ethical issues arise. It does not provide a set of rules that prescribe how social workers should act in all situations. Specific applications of the Code must take into account the context in which it is being considered and the possibility of conflicts among the Code's values, principles, and standards. Ethical responsibilities flow from all human relationships, from the personal and familial to the social and professional.

The Code articulates standards that the social work profession itself can use to assess whether social workers have engaged in unethical conduct.

Further, the NASW Code of Ethics does not specify which values, principles, and standards are most important and ought to outweigh others in instances when they conflict. Reasonable differences of opinion can and do exist among social workers with respect to the ways in which values, ethical principles, and ethical standards should be rank ordered when they conflict. Ethical decision making in a given situation must apply the informed judgment of the individual social worker and should also consider

how the issues would be judged in a peer review process where the ethical standards of the profession would be applied.

Ethical decision making is a process. There are many instances in social work where simple answers are not available to resolve complex ethical issues. Social workers should take into consideration all the values, principles, and standards in this Code that are relevant to any situation in which ethical judgment is warranted. Social workers' decisions and actions should be consistent with the spirit as well as the letter of this Code.

The NASW Code of Ethics is to be used by NASW and by individuals, agencies, organizations, and bodies (such as licensing and regulatory boards, professional liability insurance providers, courts of law, agency boards of directors, government agencies, and other professional groups) that choose to adopt it or use it as a frame of reference. Violation of standards in this Code does not automatically imply legal liability or violation of the law. Alleged violations of the Code would be subject to a peer review process.

A code of ethics cannot guarantee ethical behavior. A code of ethics sets forth values, ethical principles, and ethical standards to which professionals aspire and by which their actions can be judged. Social workers' ethical behavior should result from their personal commitment to engage in ethical practice. The NASW Code of Ethics reflects the commitment of all social workers to uphold the profession's values and to act ethically.

4.3.3 Ethical Principles

The following broad ethical principles are based on social work's core values of service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence. These principles set forth ideals to which all social workers should aspire.

Value: Service

Ethical Principle: Social workers' primary goal is to help people in need

and to address social problems.

Social workers elevate service to others above self-interest. Social workers draw on their knowledge, values, and skills to help people in need and to address social problems. Social workers are encouraged to volunteer some portion of their professional skills with no expectation of significant financial return (pro bono service).

Value: Social Justice

Ethical Principle: Social workers challenge social injustice.

Social workers pursue social change, particularly with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people. Social workers' social change efforts are focused primarily on issues of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and other forms of social injustice. These activities seek to promote sensitivity to and knowledge about oppression and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers strive to ensure access to needed information, services, and resources; equality of opportunity; and meaningful participation in decision making for all people.

Value: Dignity and Worth of the Person

Ethical Principle: Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person.

Social workers treat each person in a caring and respectful fashion, mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers promote clients' socially responsible self-determination. Social workers seek to enhance clients' capacity and opportunity to change and to address their own needs.

Value: Importance of Human Relationships

Ethical Principle: Social workers recognize the central importance of human relationships.

Social workers understand that relationships between and among people are an important vehicle for change. Social workers engage people as partners in the helping process. Social workers seek to strengthen relationships among people in a purposeful effort to promote, restore, maintain, and enhance the well-being of individuals, families, social groups, organizations, and communities.

Value: Integrity

Ethical Principle: Social workers behave in a trustworthy manner.

Social workers are continually aware of the profession's mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards and practice in a manner consistent with them. Social workers act honestly and responsibly and promote ethical practices on the part of the organizations with which they are affiliated.

Value: Competence

Ethical Principle: Social workers practice within their areas of competence and develop and enhance their professional expertise.

Social workers continually strive to increase their professional knowledge and skills and to apply them in practice. Social workers should aspire to contribute to the knowledge base of the profession.

4.3.4 Ethical Standards

The following ethical standards are relevant to the professional activities of all social workers. These standards concern (1) social workers' ethical responsibilities to clients, (2) social workers' ethical responsibilities to colleagues, (3) social workers' ethical responsibilities in practice settings, (4) social workers' ethical responsibilities as professionals, (5) social workers' ethical responsibilities to the social work profession, and (6) social workers' ethical responsibilities to the broader society.

Some of the standards that follow are enforceable guidelines for professional conduct, and some are aspirational. The extent to which each standard is enforceable is a matter of professional judgment to be exercised by those responsible for reviewing alleged violations of ethical standards.

Some of the standards that follow are enforceable guidelines for professional conduct, and some are aspirational.

SOCIAL WORKERS' ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES TO CLIENTS

1 Commitment to Clients

Social workers' primary responsibility is to promote the well-being of clients. In general, clients' interests are primary. However, social workers' responsibility to the larger society or specific legal obligations may on limited occasions supersede the loyalty owed clients, and clients should be so

advised. (Examples include when a social worker is required by law to report that a client has abused a child or has threatened to harm self or others.)

2 Self-Determination

Social workers respect and promote the right of clients to self-determination and assist clients in their efforts to identify and clarify their goals. Social workers may limit clients' right to self-determination when, in the social workers' professional judgment, clients' actions or potential actions pose a serious, foreseeable, and imminent risk to themselves or others.

3 Informed Consent

(a) Social workers should provide services to clients only in the context of a professional relationship based, when appropriate, on valid informed consent. Social workers should use clear and understandable language to inform clients of the purpose of the services, risks related to the services, limits to services because of the requirements of a third-party payer, relevant costs, reasonable alternatives, clients' right to refuse or withdraw consent, and the time frame covered by the consent. Social workers should provide clients with an opportunity to ask questions.

(b) In instances when clients are not literate or have difficulty understanding the primary language used in the practice setting, social workers should take steps to ensure clients' comprehension. This may include providing clients with a detailed verbal explanation or arranging for a qualified interpreter or translator whenever possible.

(c) In instances when clients lack the capacity to provide informed consent, social workers should protect clients' interests by seeking permission from an appropriate third party, informing clients consistent with the clients' level of understanding. In such instances social workers should seek to ensure that the third party acts in a manner consistent with clients' wishes and interests. Social workers should take reasonable steps to enhance such clients' ability to give informed consent.

(d) In instances when clients are receiving services involuntarily, social workers should provide information about the nature and extent of services and about the extent of clients' right to refuse service.

4 Competence

(a) Social workers should provide services and represent themselves as competent only within the boundaries of their education, training, license, certification, consultation received, supervised experience, or other relevant professional experience.

(b) Social workers should provide services in substantive areas or use intervention techniques or approaches that are new to them only after engaging in appropriate study, training, consultation, and supervision from people who are competent in those interventions or techniques.

(c) When generally recognized standards do not exist with respect to an emerging area of practice, social workers should exercise careful judgment and take responsible steps (including appropriate education, research, training, consultation, and supervision) to ensure the competence of their work and to protect clients from harm.

5 Cultural Competence and Social Diversity

(a) Social workers should understand culture and its function in human behavior and society, recognizing the strengths that exist in all cultures.

(b) Social workers should have a knowledge base of their clients' cultures and be able to demonstrate competence in the provision of services that are sensitive to clients' cultures and to differences among people and cultural groups.

(c) Social workers should obtain education about and seek to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, and mental or physical disability.

6 Conflicts of Interest

(a) Social workers should be alert to and avoid conflicts of interest that interfere with the exercise of professional discretion and impartial judgment. Social workers should inform clients when a real or potential conflict of interest arises and take reasonable steps to resolve the issue in a manner that makes the clients' interests primary and protects clients' interests to the greatest extent possible. In some cases, protecting clients' interests may require termination of the professional relationship with proper referral of the client.

(b) Social workers should not take unfair advantage of any professional relationship or exploit others to further their personal, religious, political, or business interests.

Dual or multiple relationships : occur when social workers relate to clients in more than one relationship, whether professional, social, or business. Dual or multiple relationships can occur simultaneously or consecutively.

(c) Social workers should not engage in dual or multiple relationships with clients or former clients in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the client. In instances when dual or multiple relationships are unavoidable, social workers should take steps to protect clients and are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries. (Dual or multiple relationships occur when social workers relate to clients in more than one relationship, whether professional, social, or business. Dual or multiple relationships can occur simultaneously or consecutively.)

(d) When social workers provide services to two or more people who have a relationship with each other (for example, couples, family members), social workers should clarify with all parties which individuals will be considered clients and the nature of social workers' professional obligations to the various individuals who are receiving services.

7 Privacy and Confidentiality

(a) Social workers should respect clients' right to privacy. Social workers should not solicit private information from clients unless it is essential to providing services or conducting social work evaluation or research. Once private information is shared, standards of confidentiality apply.

(b) Social workers may disclose confidential information when appropriate with valid consent from a client or a person legally authorized to consent on behalf of a client.

(c) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of all information obtained in the course of professional service, except for compelling professional reasons. The general expectation that social workers will keep information confidential does not apply when disclosure is necessary to prevent serious, foreseeable, and imminent harm to a client or other identifiable person. In all instances, social workers should disclose the least amount of confidential information necessary to achieve the desired purpose; only information that is directly relevant to the purpose for which the disclosure is made should be revealed.

(d) Social workers should inform clients, to the extent possible, about the disclosure of confidential information and the potential consequences, when feasible before the disclosure is made. This applies whether social workers disclose confidential information on the basis of a legal requirement or client consent.

(e) Social workers should discuss with clients and other interested parties the nature of confidentiality and limitations of clients' right to confidentiality. Social workers should review with clients circumstances where confidential information may be requested and where disclosure of confidential information may be legally required. This discussion should occur as soon as possible in the social worker-client relationship and as needed throughout the course of the relationship.

(f) When social workers provide counseling services to families, couples, or groups, social workers should seek agreement among the parties involved concerning each individual's right to confidentiality and obligation to preserve the confidentiality of information shared by others. Social workers should inform participants in family, couples, or group counseling that social workers cannot guarantee that all participants will honor such agreements.

(g) Social workers should inform clients involved in family, couples, marital, or group counseling of the social worker's, employer's, and agency's policy concerning the social worker's disclosure of confidential information among the parties involved in the counseling.

(h) Social workers should not disclose confidential information to third-party payers unless clients have authorized such disclosure.

(i) Social workers should not discuss confidential information in any setting unless privacy can be ensured. Social workers should not discuss confidential information in public or semipublic areas such as hallways, waiting rooms, elevators, and restaurants.

(j) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of clients during legal proceedings to the extent permitted by law. When a court of law or other legally authorized body orders social workers to disclose confidential or privileged information without a client's consent and such disclosure could cause harm to the client, social workers should request that the court withdraw the order or limit the order as narrowly as possible or maintain the records under seal, unavailable for public inspection.

Social workers should protect the confidentiality of clients' written and electronic records and other sensitive information.

(k) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of clients when responding to requests from members of the media.

(l) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of clients' written and electronic records and other sensitive information. Social workers should take reasonable steps to ensure that clients' records are stored in a secure location and that clients' records are not available to others who are not authorized to have access.

(m) Social workers should take precautions to ensure and maintain the confidentiality of information transmitted to other parties through the use of computers, electronic mail, facsimile machines, telephones and telephone answering machines, and other electronic or computer technology. Disclosure of identifying information should be avoided whenever possible.

(n) Social workers should transfer or dispose of clients' records in a manner that protects clients' confidentiality and is consistent with state statutes governing records and social work licensure.

(o) Social workers should take reasonable precautions to protect client confidentiality in the event of the social worker's termination of practice, incapacitation, or death.

(p) Social workers should not disclose identifying information when discussing clients for teaching or training purposes unless the client has consented to disclosure of confidential information.

(q) Social workers should not disclose identifying information when

discussing clients with consultants unless the client has consented to disclosure of confidential information or there is a compelling need for such disclosure.

(r) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of deceased clients consistent with the preceding standards.

8 Access to Records

(a) Social workers should provide clients with reasonable access to records concerning the clients. Social workers who are concerned that clients' access to their records could cause serious misunderstanding or harm to the client should provide assistance in interpreting the records and consultation with the client regarding the records. Social workers should limit clients' access to their records, or portions of their records, only in exceptional circumstances when there is compelling evidence that such access would cause serious harm to the client.

(b) When providing clients with access to their records, social workers should take steps to protect the confidentiality of other individuals identified or discussed in such records.

9 Sexual Relationships

(a) Social workers should under no circumstances engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with current clients, whether such contact is consensual or forced.

(b) Social workers should not engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with clients' relatives or other individuals with whom clients maintain a close personal relationship when there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the client. Sexual activity or sexual contact with clients' relatives or other individuals with whom clients maintain a personal relationship has the potential to be harmful to the client and may make it difficult for the social worker and client to maintain appropriate professional boundaries. Social workers-not their clients, their clients' relatives, or other individuals with whom the client maintains a personal relationship-assume the full burden for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.

(c) Social workers should not engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with former clients because of the potential for harm to the client.
(d) Social workers should not provide clinical services to individuals with whom they have had a prior sexual relationship.

10 Physical Contact

Social workers should not engage in physical contact with clients when there is a possibility of psychological harm to the client as a result of the contact (such as cradling or caressing clients). Social workers who engage in appropriate physical contact with clients are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries that govern such physical contact.

11 Sexual Harassment

Social workers should not sexually harass clients. Sexual harassment includes sexual advances, sexual solicitation, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

12 Derogatory Language

Social workers should not use derogatory language in their written or verbal communications to or about clients. Social workers should use accurate and respectful language in all communications to and about clients.

13 Payment for Services

(a) When setting fees, social workers should ensure that the fees are fair, reasonable, and commensurate with the services performed. Consideration should be given to clients' ability to pay.
(b) Social workers should avoid accepting goods or services from clients as payment for professional services. Bartering arrangements, particularly involving services, create the potential for conflicts of interest, exploitation, and inappropriate boundaries in social workers' relationships with clients. Social workers should explore and may participate in bartering only in very limited circumstances when it can be demonstrated that such arrangements

are an accepted practice among professionals in the local community, considered to be essential for the provision of services, negotiated without coercion, and entered into at the client's initiative and with the client's informed consent. Social workers who accept goods or services from clients as payment for professional services assume the full burden of demonstrating that this arrangement will not be detrimental to the client or the professional relationship.

(c) Social workers should not solicit a private fee or other remuneration for providing services to clients who are entitled to such available services through the social workers' employer or agency.

14 Clients Who Lack Decision-Making Capacity

When social workers act on behalf of clients who lack the capacity to make informed decisions, social workers should take reasonable steps to safeguard the interests and rights of those clients.

15 Interruption of Services

Social workers should make reasonable efforts to ensure continuity of services in the event that services are interrupted by factors such as unavailability, relocation, illness, disability, or death.

16 Termination of Services

(a) Social workers should terminate services to clients and professional relationships with them when such services and relationships are no longer required or no longer serve the clients' needs or interests.

(b) Social workers should take reasonable steps to avoid abandoning clients who are still in need of services. Social workers should withdraw services precipitously only under unusual circumstances, giving careful consideration to all factors in the situation and taking care to minimize possible adverse effects. Social workers should assist in making appropriate arrangements for continuation of services when necessary.

(c) Social workers in fee-for-service settings may terminate services to clients who are not paying an overdue balance if the financial contractual

arrangements have been made clear to the client, if the client does not pose an imminent danger to self or others, and if the clinical and other consequences of the current nonpayment have been addressed and discussed with the client.

(d) Social workers should not terminate services to pursue a social, financial, or sexual relationship with a client.

(e) Social workers who anticipate the termination or interruption of services to clients should notify clients promptly and seek the transfer, referral, or continuation of services in relation to the clients' needs and preferences.

(f) Social workers who are leaving an employment setting should inform clients of appropriate options for the continuation of services and of the benefits and risks of the options.

3. SOCIAL WORKERS' ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES IN PRACTICE SETTINGS

3.01 SUPERVISION AND CONSULTATION

(a) Social workers who provide supervision or consultation should have the necessary knowledge and skill to supervise or consult appropriately and should do so only within their areas of knowledge and competence.

(b) Social workers who provide supervision or consultation are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.

(c) Social workers should not engage in any dual or multiple relationships with supervisees in which there is a risk of exploitation of or potential harm to the supervisee.

(d) Social workers who provide supervision should evaluate supervisees' performance in a manner that is fair and respectful.

3.02 EDUCATION AND TRAINING

(a) Social workers who function as educators, field instructors for students, or trainers should provide instruction only within their areas of knowledge and competence and should provide instruction based

on the most current information and knowledge available in the profession.

(b) Social workers who function as educators or field instructors for students should evaluate students' performance in a manner that is fair and respectful.

(c) Social workers who function as educators or field instructors for students should take reasonable steps to ensure that clients are routinely informed when services are being provided by students.

(d) Social workers who function as educators or field instructors for students should not engage in any dual or multiple relationships with students in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the student. Social work educators and field instructors are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.

3.03 PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Social workers who have responsibility for evaluating the performance of others should fulfill such responsibility in a fair and considerate manner and on the basis of clearly stated criteria.

3.04 CLIENT RECORDS

(a) Social workers should take reasonable steps to ensure that documentation in records is accurate and reflects the services provided.

(b) Social workers should include sufficient and timely documentation in records to facilitate the delivery of services and to ensure continuity of services provided to clients in the future.

(c) Social workers' documentation should protect clients' privacy to the extent that is possible and appropriate and should include only information that is directly relevant to the delivery of services.

(d) Social workers should store records following the termination of services to ensure reasonable future access. Records should be maintained for the number of years required by state statutes or relevant contracts.

3.05 BILLING

Social workers should establish and maintain billing practices that accurately reflect the nature and extent of services provided and that identify who provided the service in the practice setting.

3.06 CLIENT TRANSFER

(a) When an individual who is receiving services from another agency or colleague contacts a social worker for services, the social worker should carefully consider the client's needs before agreeing to provide services. To minimize possible confusion and conflict, social workers should discuss with potential clients the nature of the clients' current relationship with other service providers and the implications, including possible benefits or risks, of entering into a relationship with a new service provider.

(b) If a new client has been served by another agency or colleague, social workers should discuss with the client whether consultation with the previous service provider is in the client's best interest.

3.07 ADMINISTRATION

(a) Social work administrators should advocate within and outside their agencies for adequate resources to meet clients' needs.

(b) Social workers should advocate for resource allocation procedures that are open and fair. When not all clients' needs can be met, an allocation procedure should be developed that is nondiscriminatory and based on appropriate and consistently applied principles.

(c) Social workers who are administrators should take reasonable steps to ensure that adequate agency or organizational resources are available to provide appropriate staff supervision.

(d) Social work administrators should take reasonable steps to ensure that the working environment for which they are responsible is consistent with and encourages compliance with the NASW Code of Ethics. Social work administrators should take reasonable steps to eliminate any conditions in their organizations that violate, interfere with, or discourage compliance with the Code.

3.08 CONTINUING EDUCATION AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Social work administrators and supervisors should take reasonable steps to provide or arrange for continuing education and staff development for all staff for whom they are responsible. Continuing education and staff development should address current knowledge and emerging developments related to social work practice and ethics.

3.09 COMMITMENTS TO EMPLOYERS

(a) Social workers generally should adhere to commitments made to employers and employing organizations.

(b) Social workers should work to improve employing agencies' policies and procedures and the efficiency and effectiveness of their services.

(c) Social workers should take reasonable steps to ensure that employers are aware of social workers' ethical obligations as set forth in the NASW Code of Ethics and of the implications of those obligations for social work practice.

(d) Social workers should not allow an employing organization's policies, procedures, regulations, or administrative orders to interfere with their ethical practice of social work. Social workers should take reasonable steps to ensure that their employing organizations' practices are consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics.

(e) Social workers should act to prevent and eliminate discrimination in the employing organization's work assignments and in its employment policies and practices.

(f) Social workers should accept employment or arrange student field placements only in organizations that exercise fair personnel practices.

(g) Social workers should be diligent stewards of the resources of their employing organizations, wisely conserving funds where appropriate and never misappropriating funds or using them for unintended purposes.

3.10 LABOR-MANAGEMENT DISPUTES

(a) Social workers may engage in organized action, including the formation of and participation in labor unions, to improve services to clients and working conditions.

(b) The actions of social workers who are involved in labor-management disputes, job actions, or labor strikes should be guided by the profession's values, ethical principles, and ethical standards. Reasonable differences of opinion exist among social workers concerning their primary obligation as professionals during an actual or threatened labor strike or job action. Social workers should carefully examine relevant issues and their possible impact on clients before deciding on a course of action.

4. SOCIAL WORKERS' ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES AS PROFESSIONALS

4.01 COMPETENCE

(a) Social workers should accept responsibility or employment only on the basis of existing competence or the intention to acquire the necessary competence.

Social workers should routinely review the professional literature and participate in continuing education relevant to social work practice and social work ethics.

(b) Social workers should strive to become and remain proficient in professional practice and the performance of professional functions. Social workers should critically examine and keep current with emerging knowledge relevant to social work. Social workers should routinely review the professional literature and participate in continuing education relevant to social work practice and social work ethics.

(c) Social workers should base practice on recognized knowledge, including empirically based knowledge, relevant to social work and social work ethics.

4.02 DISCRIMINATION

Social workers should not practice, condone, facilitate, or collaborate with any form of discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, national

origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, or mental or physical disability.

4.03 PRIVATE CONDUCT

Social workers should not permit their private conduct to interfere with their ability to fulfill their professional responsibilities.

4.04 DISHONESTY, FRAUD, AND DECEPTION

Social workers should not participate in, condone, or be associated with dishonesty, fraud, or deception.

4.05 IMPAIRMENT

(a) Social workers should not allow their own personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties to interfere with their professional judgment and performance or to jeopardize the best interests of people for whom they have a professional responsibility.

(b) Social workers whose personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties interfere with their professional judgment and performance should immediately seek consultation and take appropriate remedial action by seeking professional help, making adjustments in workload, terminating practice, or taking any other steps necessary to protect clients and others.

4.06 MISREPRESENTATION

(a) Social workers should make clear distinctions between statements made and actions engaged in as a private individual and as a representative of the social work profession, a professional social work organization, or the social worker's employing agency.

(b) Social workers who speak on behalf of professional social work organizations should accurately represent the official and authorized positions of the organizations.

(c) Social workers should ensure that their representations to clients,

agencies, and the public of professional qualifications, credentials, education, competence, affiliations, services provided, or results to be achieved are accurate. Social workers should claim only those relevant professional credentials they actually possess and take steps to correct any inaccuracies or misrepresentations of their credentials by others.

4.07 SOLICITATIONS

(a) Social workers should not engage in uninvited solicitation of potential clients who, because of their circumstances, are vulnerable to undue influence, manipulation, or coercion.

(b) Social workers should not engage in solicitation of testimonial endorsements (including solicitation of consent to use a client's prior statement as a testimonial endorsement) from current clients or from other people who, because of their particular circumstances, are vulnerable to undue influence.

4.08 ACKNOWLEDGING CREDIT

(a) Social workers should take responsibility and credit, including authorship credit, only for work they have actually performed and to which they have contributed.

(b) Social workers should honestly acknowledge the work of and the contributions made by others.

5. SOCIAL WORKERS' ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION

5.01 INTEGRITY OF THE PROFESSION

(a) Social workers should work toward the maintenance and promotion of high standards of practice.

(b) Social workers should uphold and advance the values, ethics, knowledge, and mission of the profession. Social workers should protect, enhance, and improve the integrity of the profession through appropriate study and research, active discussion, and responsible criticism of the profession.

(c) Social workers should contribute time and professional expertise to activities that promote respect for the value, integrity, and competence of the social work profession. These activities may include teaching, research, consultation, service, legislative testimony, presentations in the community, and participation in their professional organizations.

(d) Social workers should contribute to the knowledge base of social work and share with colleagues their knowledge related to practice, research, and ethics. Social workers should seek to contribute to the profession's literature and to share their knowledge at professional meetings and conferences.

(e) Social workers should act to prevent the unauthorized and unqualified practice of social work.

5.02 EVALUATION AND RESEARCH

(a) Social workers should monitor and evaluate policies, the implementation of programs, and practice interventions.

(b) Social workers should promote and facilitate evaluation and research to contribute to the development of knowledge.

(c) Social workers should critically examine and keep current with emerging knowledge relevant to social work and fully use evaluation and research evidence in their professional practice.

(d) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should carefully consider possible consequences and should follow guidelines developed for the protection of evaluation and research participants. Appropriate institutional review boards should be consulted.

(e) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should obtain voluntary and written informed consent from participants, when appropriate, without any implied or actual deprivation or penalty for refusal to participate; without undue inducement to participate; and with due regard for participants' well-being, privacy, and dignity. Informed consent should include information about the nature, extent, and duration of the participation requested and disclosure of the risks and benefits of participation in the research.

(f) When evaluation or research participants are incapable of giving informed consent, social workers should provide an appropriate explanation to the participants, obtain the participants' assent to the extent they are able, and obtain written consent from an appropriate proxy.

(g) Social workers should never design or conduct evaluation or research that does not use consent procedures, such as certain forms of naturalistic observation and archival research, unless rigorous and responsible review of the research has found it to be justified because of its prospective scientific, educational, or applied value and unless equally effective alternative procedures that do not involve waiver of consent are not feasible.

(h) Social workers should inform participants of their right to withdraw from evaluation and research at any time without penalty.

(i) Social workers should take appropriate steps to ensure that participants in evaluation and research have access to appropriate supportive services.

(j) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should protect participants from unwarranted physical or mental distress, harm, danger, or deprivation.

6. SOCIAL WORKERS' ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE BROADER SOCIETY

6.01 SOCIAL WELFARE

Social workers should promote the general welfare of society, from local to global levels, and the development of people, their communities, and their environments. Social workers should advocate for living conditions conducive to the fulfillment of basic human needs and should promote social, economic, political, and cultural values and institutions that are compatible with the realization of social justice.

6.02 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Social workers should facilitate informed participation by the public in shaping social policies and institutions.

6.03 PUBLIC EMERGENCIES

Social workers should provide appropriate professional services in public emergencies to the greatest extent possible.

6.04 SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ACTION

(a) Social workers should engage in social and political action that seeks to ensure that all people have equal access to the resources, employment, services, and opportunities they require to meet their basic human needs and to develop fully. Social workers should be aware of the impact of the political arena on practice and should advocate for changes in policy and legislation to improve social conditions in order to meet basic human needs and promote social justice.

(b) Social workers should act to expand choice and opportunity for all people, with special regard for vulnerable, disadvantaged, oppressed, and exploited people and groups.

(c) Social workers should promote conditions that encourage respect for cultural and social diversity within the United States and globally. Social workers should promote policies and practices that demonstrate respect for difference, support the expansion of cultural knowledge and resources, advocate for programs and institutions that demonstrate cultural competence, and promote policies that safeguard the rights of and confirm equity and social justice for all people.

(d) Social workers should act to prevent and eliminate domination of, exploitation of, and discrimination against any person, group, or class on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, or mental or physical disability.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 1

1. Social works provide counseling to whom ?
2. How lean social work be related to political action ?

4.4 MARGINALIZATION OF VULNERABLE GROUPS

Marginalization is a complex as well as shifting phenomenon linked to social status. It is an experience that affects millions of people throughout the world. People who are marginalized have relatively little control over their lives, and the resources available to them. This results in making them handicapped in delving contribution to society. A vicious circle is set up whereby their lack of positive and supportive relationships means that they are prevented from participating in local life, which in turn leads to further isolation. This has a tremendous impact on development of human beings, as well as on society at large. If we analyse the situation of marginality of the vulnerable groups, we would find that it is a complex phenomenon and needs to be examined along several dimensions. The areas of marginality include personal, collective, education, economic, health, cultural and ecological. .



People who are marginalized have relatively little control over their lives, and the resources available to them. This results in making them handicapped in delving contribution to society.

Personal dimensions include inadequate food consumption, lack of employment, poor housing and other facilities, oppression etc. The collective dimensions are leadership imposed from outside, conflict among themselves, lack of resistance to discrimination etc. Economic marginalization include lack of equitable access to land and other natural resources, poor wages for labour and not getting access to subsidized public input. Political dimension of marginalization are lack of representation and a political system which does not favour the interests of the marginalized section of society. Educational dimensions include lack of equal opportunity for education, inadequate reservations and lack of financial support for continuing higher education. Health dimensions of marginalization are lack of health facilities and inaccessibility of the people to decision making related to health. Other areas of marginalization are lack of community facilities

and ecological imbalances due to deterioration of land, water, air and other natural resources.

Vulnerable groups : Certain groups in the society often encounter discriminatory treatment and need special attention to avoid potential exploitation. This population constitutes what is referred to as vulnerable groups. But the task of identifying the vulnerable groups is not an easy one. There are multiple and complex factors of vulnerability with different layers and more often than once it cannot be analysed in isolation. Most vulnerable marginalized groups in almost every society can be summarized as below:

1. **Women:** Under different economic conditions, and under the influence of specific historical, cultural, legal and religious factors, marginalization is one of the manifestations of gender inequality. Women face double discrimination being members of specific caste, class or ethnic group apart from being experiencing gendered vulnerabilities. They have always been viewed as passive recipients, rather than active participants capable of changing their life situation. In the process, women's participation and important contribution in the productive sphere is at best by-passed and at worst ignored.
2. **Children:** Children form a very vulnerable part of the human society. They need special protection because of their fragile status of development. They face discrimination on the basis of caste, religion and ethnicity. Children's vulnerabilities and exposure to violation of their rights remain spread and multiple in nature. The manifestations of these violations are various ranging from child labour, child trafficking to commercial sexual exploitation and many other forms of violation.
3. **Scheduled caste:** The absence of equal opportunities in any walk of social life is a denial of equal status and equal participation in the affairs of the society. Caste in Indian society is a particular form of social inequality that involves a hierarchy of groups ranked in terms of ritual purity. In earlier period they were deprived of the right to education and thus were left suffering behind, socially and economically. They are a group who are in a state of oppression,

social disability and who are helpless and poor. Structural discrimination against these groups takes place in the form of physical, psychological, emotional and cultural abuse which receives legitimacy from the social structure and the social system.

4. **Scheduled tribes:** The scheduled tribes are a product of marginalization based on ethnicity. They are considered to be socially and economically disadvantaged. From the historical point of view, they have been subjected to the worst type of societal exploitation. They are mainly landless with little control over resources such as land, forest and water.
5. **Older Adults:** Ageing is a natural process. The vulnerability among the elderly is not only due to an increased incidence of illness and disability, but also due to their economic dependency upon their family members.
6. **Minority:** Minority is most commonly used to refer to communities that are numerically small in relation to the rest of the population. In such cases size can be a disadvantage and lead to the marginalization of the relatively smaller communities. Minorities includes issues of power, access to resource and has cultural and social dimension.
7. **People with disabilities**: People with disabilities have had to battle against centuries of biased assumptions, harmful stereotypes, and irrational fears. The stigmatization of disability resulted in the social and economic marginalization of generations with disabilities, and, like many other oppressed minorities, this has left people with disabilities in a severe state of impoverishment for centuries.

To summarize marginalization of vulnerable groups is a complex and serious problem which needs to be addressed at the policy level. A close understanding is required of the problems associated with the groups suffering from marginalization and the ways to reduce them.

4.5 LIMITATION OF PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORK

Over the years social work has grown from voluntary helping to an occupation and a recognized profession. But nevertheless there are certain limitations to the profession. The biggest challenge that social work faces for being recognised as a profession is the haziness of its social status. It is still assumed that social work is voluntary in nature and any individual (with a kind heart) who wishes to pursue social work can do so. Let us now examine some of the limitations faced by this profession:

1. First of all, it has a western theoretical base underlying its methodology. Such a theoretical base can affect the helping process when it lacks cultural roots in its application.
2. Most of the existing knowledge is based purely on theoretical understanding of problems and thus is problem related than practice related. This can be seen as a handicap of the profession as it exists in India today.
3. The area of specialized knowledge in social work is somewhat limited. Little attempts have been made to develop systematic empirical knowledge relating to typical problems, situations and ways of handling them.
4. Professional social work suffers from the lack of an accreditation process which in turn hampers community recognition. In the absence of a licensing system, anyone can claim the title of a social worker.
5. As regards the professional culture, though the profession has developed its own beliefs about the value of its own professional service, norms regarding how these should be reflected in behavior with clients and symbols have not been evolved. All this puts many constraints on the society to make a distinction among professionals, non-professionals and voluntary workers.

In the light of the above discussion, it becomes clear that the process of professionalization is largely incomplete for the social

work profession in India. But change is inevitable and the need of the hour is to develop a pattern responsive to the social realities. Social work requires a service mentality and a greater understanding of people. Social work education should take this aspect into consideration while formulating the content and methodology of study. Education should be made more field oriented. The villages should be laboratories for students. Also there is a need to change the content and methodology of social work education vis-à-vis the present day social realities.

4.6 PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORKERS ASSOCIATION IN INDIA & ABROAD

With the rising growth of social work education, the need of professional organizations was felt. The professional bodies of social workers that functions at the international level are:

1. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW): NASW is a professional organization of social workers in the United States. NASW has about 132,000 members. It is committed to helping social workers meet their professional development needs. This strong dedication has led to the creation of multiple professional development programs and products such as credentials, education and training courses, newsletters, employment information, resources, and publications. The Association developed and adopted the NASW Code of Ethics and other generalized and specialized practice standards. Further the association is concerned with (i) laying down and maintaining proper standards in professional social work education and promoting the profession on scientific lines,(ii) providing opportunity to faculty members to meet and exchange their ideas, (iii) arranging seminars and refresher courses for faculty members, (iv) encouraging and coordinating researches and promoting publication of literature on different subjects relating to social work, (v) disseminating information pertaining to social work

education and (vi) working as a national forum on all matters concerning social work education.

2. International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW): International council on Social Welfare was founded in Paris in 1928 under the original name of International Conference of Social Work. It became the International Council on Social Welfare on the 1st of January 1967. The main aim of ICSW is to advance social welfare, social justice and social development. Further it gathers and disseminates information, undertake research & analysis e, convenes seminar & conferences, draws on grass root expertise, strengthen nongovernmental organizations, develop policy proposals, engages in public advocacy and work with policy makers and administrators in government and elsewhere.

3. International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW): International Association of schools of social work is an international association of institutions of social work education. It is an organization supporting social work education and social work educators. It adheres to all United Nation declaration and conventions on human right, recognizing that respect for the inalienable right of the individual is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace with the aim of developing and promoting excellence in social work education, research and scholarship globally in order to enhance human wellbeing.

4. International Federation of Social Work (IFSW): IFSW is an international non-governmental organization of national associations of social work. The federation works for social justice, human rights and social development through promotion of social work, best practice models and facilitation of international cooperation. Currently it has more than 100 members in all regions of the world and was accorded Special Consultative Status by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations. The federation works in closely with the regional representatives to ensure that it works in the best interest of social workers.

Besides this, there are several professional organizations functioning at the National level. Some of these are:

i. Associations of Schools of Social Work in India (ASSWI): ASSWI was established in 1959 at Baroda. It is a professional organization engaged in the promotion of standards of social work education in the country. It has represented the profession by taking up social issues and concerns related to social work education at the national level since the early sixties. This association is functioning through its elected executive committee. Most of the members of ASSWI are from Schools of Social Work/Departments of Social Work which were established during the second half of the 20th century.

ii. The Indian Society of Professional Social Work (ISPSW): ISPSW is the oldest association of professional social workers in India. It has been geared towards the goal of Empowering Society for Social Development. The Society was formerly known as Indian Society of Psychiatric Social Work. It was established in the year 1970 by Dr. R.K.Upadhyaya and his staff of the Dept of Psychiatric Social Work, Central Institute of Psychiatry, Ranchi. The present name of the Society was considered in the year 1988, because of an increased representation of the trainers, practitioners and researchers of all specialization of Social Work. The association primarily focuses on uniting the professional social workers to debate, discuss and develop conceptual frameworks and feasible indigenous interventions of social work for practice in India. In order to facilitate this purpose, the Society has conducted many annual Conferences seminars and symposia on various social issues, all over India. Many of the life members of this Society are representing various reputed National and International organizations, Universities and other agencies all over the World. The Society regularly identifies and felicitates esteemed personalities from the Social Work and its related fields.

The Indian Society : of Professional Social Work (ISPSW): ISPSW is the oldest association of professional social workers in India. It has been geared towards the goal of Empowering Society for Social Development.

iii. National association of professional social workers in India (NAPSWI): NAPSWI is a non profit, non-political, national level

organization dedicated to the promotion of standard and status of social work profession in India. The association received legal status as a society under the Society Registration Act XXI of 1860 on 9th September 2005. This national association comprises social work institutions, schools and departments, educators, practitioners as well as students from every state in the country. NAPSWI intends to fulfill the twin purpose of promoting 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 the other hand. NAPSWI aims to advance excellence in education, training and practice of professional social work through -Education, Research, Training, Networking, Advocacy and Resource Development.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 2

3. What is the main aim of ICSW.
4. How does caste system oppress ?





4.7 LET US SUM UP

- The code of ethics was first developed by National Association of Social Workers (NASW) The NASW Code of Ethics is intended to serve as a guide to the everyday professional conduct of social workers
- Professional ethics are at the core of social work. The profession has an obligation to articulate its basic values, ethical principles, and ethical standards. The NASW Code of Ethics sets forth these values, principles, and standards to guide social workers' conduct.
- Marginalization is a complex as well as shifting phenomenon linked to social status.

- Certain groups in the society often encounter discriminatory treatment and need special attention to avoid potential exploitation. This population constitutes what is referred to as vulnerable groups.
- The biggest challenge that social work faces for being recognised as a profession is the haziness of its social status.
- The professional organizations at the international level are NASW, ICSW,IASSW
- Professional organizations at the national level are ASSWI, ISPSW,NAPSWI



4.8 FURTHER READING

- "Code of ethics",In standards for the Professional Practice of Social Work,AASW,New York
- Friedlander,A.W: Concepts and methods of social work, Prentice Hall of India,Ltd,New Delhi
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- Flexner, A. (1915).Is Social Work a Profession? In Proceedings of the National Conference of Charities and Correction.Chicago:Hildman Printing
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- Choudhury,D.P.(2001).Introduction to Social Work.New Delhi:Atma Ram
- Bhattacharya,Sanjay.(2006).Social Work an Integrated Approach.New Delhi:Deep&Deep

- http://www.ifsw.org/en/p38000139.html
- http://www.napswionline.org/aims.html

4.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. When social workers provide counseling services to families, couples, or groups, social workers should seek agreement among the parties involved concerning each individual's right to confidentiality and obligation to preserve the confidentiality of information shared by others. Social workers should inform participants in family, couples, or group counseling that social workers cannot guarantee that all participants will honor such agreements.
2. Social workers should engage in social and political action that seeks to ensure that all people have equal access to the resources, employment, services, and opportunities they require to meet their basic human needs and to develop fully. Social workers should be aware of the impact of the political arena on practice and should advocate for changes in policy and legislation to improve social conditions in order to meet basic human needs and promote social justice.
3. The main aim of ICSW is to advance social welfare, social justice and social development. Further it gathers and disseminates information, undertake research & analysis e, convenes seminar & conferences, draws on grass root expertise, strengthen nongovernmental organizations, develop policy proposals, engages in public advocacy and work with policy makers and administrators in government and elsewhere.
4. Caste in Indian society is a particular form of social inequality that involves a hierarchy of groups ranked in terms of ritual purity. In earlier period they were deprived of the right to education and thus were left suffering behind, socially and economically. They are a group who are in a state of oppression, social disability and who are helpless and poor. Structural discrimination against these groups

takes place in the form of physical, psychological, emotional and cultural abuse which receives legitimacy from the social structure and the social system.



4.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

1. Highlight the various sections of the code of ethics .
2. What do you understand by the term marginalization?
3. Define vulnerable groups.
4. Discuss the various ethical principles enshrined in the code of ethics.
5. Discuss the different categories of vulnerable groups who face discrimination in Indian context.
6. Describe the professional social workers association in India.
7. Explain the professional bodies of social workers that function at the International level.

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