



CURRENT PROSPECTS OF SOCIAL WORK IN INDIA AND ABROAD

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Abstract

Social work grew out of humanitarian and democratic ideals, and its values are based on respect for the equality, worth, and dignity of all people. Since its beginnings over a century ago, social work practice focused on meeting human needs and developing human potential. Human rights and social justice serve as the motivation and justification for social work action. In solidarity with those who are disadvantaged, the profession strives to alleviate poverty and to liberate vulnerable and oppressed people in order to promote social inclusion. Social work profession addresses the barriers, inequities and injustices that exist in society. Its mission is to help people to develop their full potential, enrich their lives, and prevent dysfunction. Professional social work is focused on problem solving and change. As such, social workers are change agents in society and in the lives of the individuals, families and communities they serve. Social work utilizes a variety of skills, techniques, and activities consistent with its holistic focus on persons and their environments. Social work interventions range from primarily person-focused psychosocial processes to involvement in social policy, planning and development. Social work education provides a theoretical framework and a set of real-world skills that gives social workers the flexibility to work in a wide range of settings with confidence and proficiency. One professional realm that social workers are well-prepared for is business. Many social workers who run their own businesses are in private practice. In addition to private practice in mental health, however, many social workers also use their professional skills for other business ventures. Many have launched businesses after years of professional practice; some also prepare themselves through business and management degrees.

Introduction:

Today the society is becoming more and more complex in its working. The prime slogan of today's world is the survival of the fittest. This has increased the number of helpless, deprived and disadvantaged. Here social work has a major role to play. Social work utilize resources to sort out the problems of such people and try to ameliorate and alleviate their pain and suffering. Social workers try to prevent social problems caused by poverty, unemployment, inadequate health and education facility, alcoholism, drug abuse etc.

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professional practice; some also prepare themselves through business and management degrees.

Present Scenario of Social Work Profession in India:

Social Work as profession in India has already passed its infancy long back and in the last few decades it has emerged as one of the most demanding profession in India. In India a person – holding a Bachelor (BSW) or Master (M.A in Social Work/MSW) degree in Social Work is generally considered a professional social worker. As far as Indian scenario is concerned professional social workers can be found in direct practice in administrative, management and policy planning positions in various Government and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) as well as in government ministries. Both Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have a lot to offer, if you are willing to work hard and in any given conditions. International organizations too are socially aware and hence a number of opportunities are available in international social work. Industrial and commercial units too are looking to hire social workers. A degree or diploma in Social Work is creating a large number opportunities for the millions of Indian youth in various sectors.

Social Work is a really vast field and the job prospects of a social worker is not specific to a particular field. Social workers deal with persons, families, organizations and groups. They try to minimize and prevent social problems caused by factors such as poverty, unemployment, alcoholism, lack of health services, family maladjustments, physical, mental and emotional handicaps, anti-social behaviour and poor housing. Professionally, Social workers may be classified as three types namely Macro, Meso and Micro. Macro social workers deal with Social work nationally and internationally, by making policies and sponsorships; while Meso workers handle social work with small organizations, agencies and groups. Micro social workers work with individuals and families.

There are ample job opportunities for MSW degree holders in both the government as well as non-governmental sectors. Opportunity in the governmental sector is mainly in the community development projects pertaining to health, education, rural development, child, woman and tribal welfare etc. Work in NGOs' can be specific to either urban or rural area. Postgraduates in Social Work also have job opportunities in the industrial and corporate sector. Students opting social work as career may find job in child welfare and family service agencies for providing mental, health, medical, educational and correctional services.

Need of Professionals in Various Sectors:

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Prospects for Professional Social Workers in Development Sectors:

At present the development sector is largely controlled and managed by the welfare or Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) – which are doing the pioneer work towards the overall development of the society. A person with a degree (preferably a Master degree) in Social Work is highly preferred in developmental agencies and NGOs. In other words, it can be said that NGO sectors as well as the development sectors are being dominated by the professional social workers. As far as the salary of a professional social worker in development sector (in India) is concerned – it varies from organization to organization.

Enormous employment opportunities are available for social workers in private as well as public sector companies. Though it was considered a low paid profession earlier, these days many corporate offices are taking up social responsibilities and they search for good qualified social workers who are paid in par with the other workers. Career opportunities in this field would depend on an individual's area of specialization. Social workers who specialize in the area of human resource management can get jobs in the Personnel, HRM, Welfare departments of factories and commercial organizations, as executive officers, trainee officers, welfare officers and social security officers. Trained professionals can get executive cadre jobs in government, semi-government undertakings, private organizations as labor welfare officers, welfare officers, social workers etc. There are also Non-Government Organizations (NGO) and institutes providing services to different sections in the society. NGO's need trained social workers to work in various fields. Social workers can also take up teaching assignments. After a few years of experience, one can even become a consultant with various organizations and can also start freelance work.

Social workers can pursue a career as a counselor in healthcare, adoption, environmental protection, community policing etc. They can specialize in child welfare and family services, mental health services, public assistance, medical social work, community organization, social work, planning and policy development or social welfare administration.

Opportunities in Abroad:

Globalization and the new wave of technological innovations, coupled with global interdependence between and among individuals, groups, and nations, are having a tremendous effect on social work education and practice throughout the world. With increasing global social problems, social work professionals *are* continuously engaged in finding solutions to both local and global problems. This trend is reflected in the social work profession's involvement in a variety of international dimensions of practice and with various organizations concerned with global challenges and issues. Vast opportunities are available for social workers abroad. Globalization widened the scope of employment for students opting for social work (medical and psychiatry) as their career.

Social workers have a unique skill set that is in demand in many parts of the world, and some may feel their skills could be better applied in an international setting. While jobs in domestic and international social work can be similar, the lifestyle and cultural challenges are different. Social workers unique skills and flexible approaches to problem-solving can help develop human potential in places where people have been oppressed and create peaceful, mutual solutions to strife-filled situations.

The advantages of social work jobs abroad can outweigh the lack of a financial reward. Success and the satisfaction that comes with it in all fields of social work are depending on the knowledge of, and familiarity with, human behavior. Challenging yourself to learn in a different cultural context through social work abroad will widen your perspective and experiences, show you new ways to practice old skills, and show you how other professionals treat seemingly universal problems and conditions.

The International Federation of Social Workers states, "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. It recognizes the complexity of interactions between human beings and their environment, and the capacity of people both to be affected by and to alter the multiple influences upon them including bio-psychosocial factors. The social work profession draws on theories of human development and behaviour and social systems to analyze complex situations and to facilitate individual, organizational, social and cultural changes."

The current state of social work professional development is characterized by two realities. There is a great deal of traditional social and psychological research (both qualitative and quantitative) being carried out primarily by university-based researchers and by researchers based in institutes, foundations, or social service agencies. Meanwhile, many social work practitioners continue to look to their own experience for knowledge. This is a continuation of the debate that has persisted since the outset of the profession in the first decade of the twentieth century.

Conclusion:

Professional social workers are found in every facet of community life in old age homes, orphanages, schools, hospitals, mental health clinics, prisons, corporations and in numerous public and private agencies that serve individuals and families in need. Social work is not just about doing good deeds and helping the under-privileged. Over a period of time, it has evolved into a profession. Correctly it is not a 'conventional' career. But with issues of disability, drug misuse, poverty, mental ill health, problems associated with aging etc. rising constantly, social work has become a vital need of our society today. If you are willing to take up a profession for emotional fulfillment and if your purpose of working is not just financial, this would be the ideal career for you. Social workers require new levels of understanding and new models of practice if they are to contribute effectively toward the resolution of social problems that are rooted in worldwide social, political, and economic realities. At a minimum these new models of practice must reflect an understanding of the transnational nature of the social problems that bring clients, client groups, and other constituencies to the attention of human service workers. They also must be grounded on empirical evidence and must offer positive guidance concerning a range of social development solutions that can be applied to discrete social needs.

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