



SCOPE OF SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION IN INDUSTRIAL ESTABLISHMENT

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Abstract: *Industrial social work's development is influenced by the historical forces — social, economic and cultural in a particular country at a specific point of time. The field of industrial social work is still evolving in India as well as other parts of the world. The scope of social work in an industrial organization is within the administrative purview of the personnel or labour welfare department, as the department is concerned with the welfare of the operative employees. This paper examines the challenges and opportunities of social workers in industrial establishment.*

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INTRODUCTION

Social work, as a part of welfare service for industrial workers in the community, has been developed by the management over past several years. Social work in the work place is on the cutting edge of practice. Several business and industries, large and small, have introduced social workers into their personnel systems to help employees and their families with personal, family and community problems. There has been a duality of purpose in mind, humanitarianism and more efficient and effective production. The changes that are occurring in the world of business and industry and projected to continue at a more rapid pace into the 21st century can pose problems of great magnitude and concern to social work. Industrial social work today will have to drastically change itself not only terms of the course content which is taught to the students in the class-room but also in terms of the priority in use of its well accepted methods which are generally practiced today in an integrated form. With these changes in the industrial scenario, the roles of social worker need to change from that of treating alcoholic employees to diverse affairs. This article mainly emphasizing the origin of industrial social work in the west and in India, the changing nature of work force and their problems and challenging roles of social workers as practitioners and researchers in the application of social work in industrial settings.

INDUSTRIAL SOCIAL WORK — HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Industrial social work's development is influenced by the historical forces — social, economic and cultural in a particular country at a specific point of time. In Europe, scientific social work has its root in the early 20th century. From 1789 the granting of permission for production to private entrepreneurs contributed to a spectacular increase in technical progress.

The vital role of manpower in the process of production was completely ignored. The number of working hours per day, night work for women and the employment of children in factories were greatly evident. The problems related like monotonous work and a bureaucratic set-up in the factory system created distance between employer and employee. The second phase of the industrial era in Europe falls in the period between the two world war (1918-1944), It was a significant period in relation to the employee's welfare. The phase was marked by increasing recognition of the human factor in industry. However, the concept of workers welfare at this stage was almost exclusively related to the



employer's concern for increase in out put and profit. The unity of the working class forced the employer and the government to rethink about them an as a result, various social security measures were enacted. Further, certain social services outside the scope of stipulated minimum standards were also offered by some undertakings in Europe. They were mostly in the form of leisure time services, housing, transport, creches, and home assistance services, etc. The underlying emphasis in social work as represented by these services was one of material help. The administration of these services was entrusted to the representatives of employees or to the social workers in industry.

In the early 20th century, in addition to the changes in the political systems emphasizing workers welfare, the advance in social science such as industrial psychology, industrial sociology etc. added new dimensions to the understanding of the worker as a psycho — social entity rather than a mechanical robot. As a sequence to the development in the political thinking and in the social sciences, the task of the personnel social worker becomes more administrative in nature. The administration of social services included the responsibilities for selection, placement, transfers, work analysis, merit- rating, etc. and compelled the social workers to combine personnel and social work tasks. Consequently, with the collaboration of the Technical Assistance office of the United Nations, Geneva, and the International Federation organised two International study groups on the functions and working methods of personnel social worker. The report of these study groups formed the basis for development of the concept of Industrial social work as formulated in the Report of European seminar on Personnel social Work, held under the European Social Welfare programme (1961).The report high lighted the need for personnel social work in industrial settings.(Desai.1979).

In Britain the concept of social work in industry has been virtually non-existent. It was only during the Industrial Welfare Movement between 1890-1913, that there was a brief spell of welfare activities undertaken by enlightens employers. Consequently the management employed female welfare workers on their staff to look after the problems of the women and children working in the factory. The Quaker firms of Rowntrees and Cadburys took the lead in this movement, (Jacob, K.K.1973). The emergencies created by the Second World War led to the increase of personnel departments. Proper placement and training of youth and women with out previous work experience, helping bombed out employees and fire



fighting were the tasks assigned to them in addition to strictly personnel functions like recruitment, problem regarding wage, training courses etc. Another crucial event was the Great depression in the 1930's which dealt a strong blow to the socio-economic stability in the west especially in England. However, in so far as it stuck at the roots of the lassies faire philosophy and shook the conservation of the powerful elite and gave rise to federal and state legislation to safeguard the rights of industrial workers, it proved to be a blessing in disguise. The influence of the political and economic conditions in a country in the development of the pattern of welfare practice in industry. The change of focus is reflected in the history of the Industrial Welfare Society and organization established in 1917. There was a change in the title of the survey of Employee Services from Employee Assistant Programme(EAP). All these changes revealed the increasing trend towards scientific management in Britain. Industrial alcoholism programmes made their initial appearance in the 1940s when the industrial community recognized that alcoholic employees were costly and unproductive.

In America the pattern of welfare work in industry had a close parallel to developments in Britain. The industrial revolution and its effects contributed to the emergence of a form of personnel work. The precedent for occupational social work can be traced back to the period of early industrialization in the United States. Textile mills depended on a labour force of young women from farms who worked to fund their trousseaux. This model of early social work in the work place exists in some Third World Countries to day. Since the 1950s occupational social work practice has grown dramatically. Understanding the problem that affect productivity, what ever the cause must be redressed if he organization is to remain competitive, management has supported the varied need of the work force.

In India the foundation of modem industries were laid down in the mid-nineteenth century with the advance of British rule. The emphasis shifted from small local manufactures to the development of plantations, cotton mills, jute mills and other large industries. Emergence of labour welfare officers was first seen in the Cotton Textile Mills in Bombay and in jute industries in Calcutta in the 1930s. This was done in accordance with the stipulation of the Royal Commission on Labour(1931). The concept of welfare work in industry at this stag was influenced by statutory requirements. Requirement of labour and settling of grievances of the industrial workers were the main task of the first labour welfare officers. The 1930's also



saw the establishment of the Sir Dorabji Tata Graduate School of Social Work in Bombay. The initial emphasis in the training of social workers was "generic", to which, the would-be-welfare workers in industry were admitted. A glance at the Five Year Plans will also reveal that more and more stress came to be laid on the provision of services and facilities for industrial labour like health services, social security schemes, housing, welfare funds, holiday homes, recreational centers etc. Social workers trained specifically for this purpose was required. Hence during the 1960s the practice of industrial social work as distinct from labour welfare and personnel management emerged. (Desai 1979)

INDUSTRIAL SOCIAL WORK OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The field of industrial social work is still evolving in India as well as other parts of the world. It is not yet defined and there no singular model of practice to guide the profession. Industrial social work therefore refers to the utilization of social work expertise in meeting the needs of workers or union members and the serving of broader organizational goals of the setting. For social workers, it offers the opportunity to intervene in a multiple of environmental systems that affects the individual. The main objectives of industrial social work are (a) Industrial social work trying to help employees to develop their inner resources and if necessary to mobilize other services within the enterprise to bring about changes in the work environment. (b) Industrial social work helping workers in their personal and family difficulties to act as a resource person to community services and to become liaison between the plant and the community services.(c)to care of young persons, women and workers nearing superannuation.(d)helping workers for better adjustment to working hours, working conditions and work groups and to help management in evolving suitable working hours, working conditions and work group.(e)orientation and induction of the employees and to assist the "work community" as a whole to function in a better way.(f) to direct the growth along desirable lines for which, utilizing the present facilities and resources in a better and fruitful way adjusting the individual to his complex changing world.

The scope of social work in an industrial organization is within the administrative purview of the personnel or labour welfare department, as the department is concerned with the welfare of the operative employees. Occasionally it may be directly under the management. There is much scope of social work functionary in industrial organization and when the problems are concentrated on the shop floor level, the main emphasis on the social case



work method. Social work traditionally has worked with disadvantaged persons. Counseling and therapy with the individuals and families are the services needed in business and industry. An effort is made to help individuals, employers and often, their families to understand their problems in social relationships, face the problems, consider alternatives and move ahead with action that seems best of their solutions. Programmes connected with the family life and community life of the workers, there is a need of having skills in group work and community organization methods. So these three core methods of social work practice help the social worker to function at three levels (i) preventive. (ii) Developmental, (iii) curative. (Sinha Debotosh 2007).

THE CHANGING NATURE OF WORKFORCE AND THE EMERGING ISSUES

Today's workforce is considerably different from what it was even a decade ago. The current workforce is much more diverse. Women are increasingly coming into the workforce, because of technological and economic changes. Today workers are no longer content to be just economic tools in the production of goods and services. They want to be treated as human beings who have hope, aspirations, anxieties and fears that need to be handled. They want challenge and personal growth through work. They want to be treated as equals. However the worker's rising expectations and some perceived unresponsiveness of the industry to these expectations have resulted in increased frustration with and alienation from the workplace. Employees experience at least one major career shift before they retire. Being terminated from job for reasons other than job performance will also become much more common as global changes that affect the work place continue to occur. The changing nature of work force is leading many emerging issues in the work place some of them are discussing below.

EMERGING ISSUES BECAUSE OF WOMEN WORK FORCE

For women and their families, such as patterns of child rearing and affordable child care, flexible working hours, transportation to and from work, and job training, in addition to salary, benefits, pensions, and compensation are crucial. For their employers, absenteeism and tardiness, sick leave, and employee stress become factor no matter how competent and hard working their employees are. Other some issues are decreased flexibility of the workforce as two-career families become less willing to relocate: fewer distinctions



between male's and female's jobs and wage rates, increase in part time, flexible, and stay-at-home jobs and decrease in total work hours per employee.

Aging workforce -The two important trends in the global scenario are that the younger worker group is decreasing while older workers are the fastest growing group. The increased aging of the workforce and of society is likely to have some impacts (Sinha Debotosh 2007).

- A more experienced, stable, reliable workforce should increase productivity.
- A continuing decrease in the number of workers available to assume responsibility for those not in the workforce will have long-term implications for areas such as social security.
- The labour market for younger workers may actually tighten as companies initially forced to rise such as increased automation.
- Those aging workers who leave or lose jobs will have a difficult time seeking new jobs at there previous levels.

Increased Stress - Most standard textbooks in medicine attribute anywhere from 50% to 80% of all disease to stress-related or psychosomatic origins. One of the main sources of stress is job pressures. Particularly any job has stresses. The list of stress- related illnesses includes bronchial asthma hypertension, headache, migraine, insomnia, constipation, cancer etc. Stress is also one of the causes of emotional disorders. Employers are becoming increasingly aware of the cost of stress to employees and to their businesses, absenteeism, low productivity, short and long term stress related illnesses, job dissatisfaction, marital difficulties and emotional disorders.

Violence in work place -Work place violence is an increasing problem identified by employers and their employees. Some employees are bringing their family problems to work, or are harassed by other often family members, while at work.

Sexual Harassment - It is another concern in the work place, both to employers and their employees. The costs of sexual harassment can be extremely damaging both emotionally and from a cost perspective to employers. It is difficult to obtain accurate figures about the actual incidence of sexual harassment in the workplace, because half of all people who are harassed never report it. They may fear that they will loose their jobs or experience other retribution.



Occupational Health Hazards - A number of occupational health hazards affect workers. These include on-the-job accidents and work-related illnesses including job stress. Accidents and other on-the-job health hazards create additional stresses for employees and their families. Workers in chemical plants who contract cancer and miscarry or produce children born with congenial deformities, and construction workers who may be heart by heavy equipment place themselves and their families in jeopardy.

Changing expectation about balancing work and family life- Researchers in one recent study found that increasing numbers of individuals are giving importance in personnel or family time than their work and salary. It is indicated that they would turn down promotion if it is seriously affected the amount of time they could spent with their families.

Mental health of employees and families- Increasingly, employees, and their families lacking a support system and unable to cope with life's pressure, succumb to divorce, family violence, substance abuse, suicide, other health or emotional problems. For workers and families facing such pressures, however, options are often limited. Many individuals work because they have to in order to support their families. Women workers who work different hours than other family members, balancing work and family pressure is still difficult.

Issues of working parents-Millions of children under the age of 14 are with out adequate child care while their parents work. Often, infants and toddlers are left sleeping alone at night by working parents. It is not unusual for children ages 4 and 5 to be left at home lone for long period of time, and children as young s 8 are often left in charge of much younger children. Increases youth related delinquent acts, as well as increases teenage pregnancy, are being attributed partly to the lack of supervision provided to adolescents while their parents work.

Care of elderly parents is another problem increasingly affecting employees. Women caring for dependent adults report health problems, emotional disorders, and problems with absenteeism and tardiness. Many middle aged women are projected to have dual responsibilities for dependent children an elderly parents, a situation describes as the" sandwich phenomena". (Sinha Debotosh 2007).

CHANGING TRENDS IN INDUSTRIAL SOCIAL WORK

Social work in industry today will have to drastically change itself not only in term of the course content but in priority in use of its various well accepted methods which are



generally practiced today in an integrated form. Because human resource is most important concern of every industrial organization at present and individualized attention is being given even to the personal problems of all the different kinds of human constituents of industrial establishments. Helping employees to maintain a quality life in the work place and at home is increasingly accepted as a goal of management and trade unions. In this context the social work profession is being solicited to deliver various services. Social work practice be broadened beyond the one-on-one, person centered clinical social work. Elements of occupational environment should be viewed as potential targets of change for the practitioner and the client. The expanded clinical perspective of occupational social work is based on ecological and eclectic orientation, with a conviction that social workers. to be effective in the work setting, must be receptive to acquiring new knowledge and skill.(Balgopa1,1989). Many social workers use the term occupational social work synonymously with industrial social work.

According to Smith (1989), occupational social work offers practitioners the opportunity to rationalize and humanize contemporary society by increasing responsiveness of organizations to equal opportunity, and respect for their employees.

Occupational social work can be involved in Macro practice (such as organizational interventions on behalf of employees group) as well as individual clinical activities. Occupational social work also will require collective action for job-related services that will improve and humanize the quality of work life, by establishing co-operative relationships with management and trade unions and simultaneously ensuring that the clinical social workers efforts are not perceived as co-opting union responsibilities (Zink, 1983). Occupational social workers have to translate knowledge about the occupational settings in to specific skills. Although social work practice includes various assessment, intervention and evaluation techniques, most of these techniques focus on the individual. These techniques need to be supplemented with new skills, advocacy on behalf of employees, negotiation with management, persuasion of bureaucratic decision makers, and interpretation of industrial legislation.

Occupational social work need to be designed, modified, strengthened further by using information regarding worker's personal problems(which add to the cost of company



operation) job performance problems, extent of social services, major personal problems of service users, and programme outcome distribution (Yamatani, 1988).

MODELS OF OCCUPATIONAL SOCIAL WORK

Straussner (1998) had developed a typology of FIVE models of occupational social work that may be useful in future for practice in the world of work.

Employee Service model

This model gives importance to worker's micro level system in which employees and their families function. In this model social work functions include counselling employees and their families, providing educational programmes to employees and their families providing educational programmes to employees, referring employees to other agencies, implementing recreational programmes, counselling with management regarding individual employee problems and training supervisors in recognizing and dealing appropriately with employee problem. The broad range of social, psychological, vocational and financial needs of workers and their families are meeting through direct service delivery in work place and labour sponsored settings.

Consumer Service Model

This model focuses in intervention at a broader level within the same system, This model views employees as consumers and assist them in identifying needs and advocating to get these needs met. Social workers work with consumers employees in assessing their needs, developing strategies to best meet the needs identified, identifying and providing community resources to meet the needs, serving as a liaison between consumer-employee group and social services agencies and developing out reach programmes to meet employee needs.

Corporate Social responsibility Model

Linkage of work organization resources to the wide range of community will play an increasing role in the activities carried out by occupational social worker in the future. Social workers broadened their activities within work organization to include the use of community organization skills in networking, needs assessment, and programme development within the community, in tandem with more traditional roles of advertisement and consultation in corporate giving endeavour. Social workers operating within the realm of this model work with the work place, community, and society in general in developing employees and their families.



Employee/work Organization Service model

Changes in the workforce and structure of work organizations will require and expanded rate for social workers in the area of policy development and programme planning. social work consultation to organizations will increasingly be aimed at influencing work organization policy in the areas of health and safety practices, conflict meditation, benefit structures, training and development ,and affirmative action.

Work-related Public Policy Model

Policy planning and analysis in the world of work has been identified as an area requiring further emphasis and development. the trends in the work place and among the work force identified the areas for social policy development in the world of work, including, training and educational needs within a given community or among the working age population as a whole, the effect of work place production processes an employee and community health, and the degree to which work organization human resources and health benefit policies meet the needs of a changing workforce and family structure.

CHALLENGING ROLES OF OCCUPATIONAL SOCIAL WORKERS

With changes in the industrial scenario, the social workers also have to change their roles to fit into the present situation keeping intact the very essence of the concept of social work practice in industry along with the social work methods, values and ethics. The roles o social workers need to change from that of treating alcoholic employees to diverse affairs which are given below:

Gerontology address issues such as pension adequacy, advancing programmes in pre- and post retirement counseling, increasing services to retirees and assisting with job reentry and training and retraining for old workers, all of which relate directly to the work experience of older people.(Crawley,1992).Social worker .The gerent logical method of enquiry, which examines the inter relationship of social, psychological and physical changes in aging can provide social workers with a realistic, dynamic perspective and a deeper understanding of the older workers.

CONCLUSION

The changes that are occurring in the world of business and industry and projected to continue at a more rapid pace in to the 21St century can pose problems of great magnitude and concern to social work. More precisely with the adoption of New Economic Policy are



the biggest factors which will make impact on development of occupational social work practice in organizations. The current workforce is diverse in nature. Many new issues are also emerging in the work place. The above mentioned changes are given a number of challenges to social workers for performing their role as occupational social workers in industries. For facing these challenges, it has no option but to train the social work professionals in such a manner that they become equipped with adequate knowledge relating to human development and behavior, organizational behavior, social policy, industrial and labour laws etc. In a nut shell, human and social development inclusive of human rights and social duties with special reference to industrial organizations must permeate all social work teaching, practice and research.

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