

## Introduction to the Profession of Social Work

### 1.1. Definition of Social Work

Ever since social work began to evolve as a distinct profession, its definition has been debated. There is a basic need for a practical definition to better explain the profession to itself, the public, and policy makers. Emerging from a two-pronged approach—intervention with individuals and at the community level—social work is now a recognized and licensed profession. Ultimately, one could argue, as Richmond (1917) did, that the profession of social work is defined every day in hundreds of thousands of ways by individuals with the title of social worker by who they are and what they do. Central to a definition, as Bartlett (1958) noted, are the core ingredients of values, purpose, sanction, knowledge, and method.

#### ***Progressive Definition of Social Work***

1. “Social work is the professional activity of helping individuals, groups, or communities enhance or restore their capacity for social functioning and creating social conditions favourable to this goal” (NASW, 1973). This statement provides a concise one –sentence “dictionary definition” of the profession. It draws important boundaries around social work.

*First, social work is considered as a professional activity.* Professional activity requires a particular body of knowledge, values, and skills as well as a discrete purpose that guides one’s practice activities. When practice is judged professional, community sanction to perform these tasks is assumed to be present, and the profession, in turn, is expected to be accountable to the public for the quality of services provided. Therefore, the definition implies social work has fulfilled these requirements.

*Second, the definition captures the uniqueness of social work.* It makes clear that social workers serve a range of client system that include individuals, families, or other house hold units, groups, organizations, neighbourhoods, communities and even larger unities of society. For social work, identification of one client system is difficult because client or target of practice activity may range from an individual to a state or a nation. The unique activities of social workers are directed towards helping all those systems interact more effectively and require professional education as preparation.

Katherine Kendall (1978) argues that the *uniqueness of social work as a professional activity* rests on its capacity to:

*Assess the nature of the need and the problem, to estimate the capacity of the person to handle the problem, to foster every inner strength of the person toward the goal of finding his own solution and to utilize all the outer resources of the environment and the community which might be of value in this problem-solving endeavour.*

*Finally, the last part of the definition concerns social workers dual focus on person and environment.* Social workers help people enhance or restore their capacity for social functioning. At the same time they work to change societal conditions that may help or hinder people from improving their social functioning. Here lies another uniqueness of social work. Its concern with the fit between individuals and their social circumstances is a distinctive characteristic of social work and provides its foundation as a discipline in its own right. When working with clients, social workers must take into consideration both the characteristics of the person and the impinging forces from the environment. Social workers operate at the boundary between people and their environment. Whereas some professions focus on changing the person and others on changing the environment, social works attention is directed to the connection between person and environment. In contrast, the physician is primarily prepared to treat physical aspects of the individual, and the attorney is largely concerned with the operation of the legal system in the larger environment (although both the physician and attorney should give secondary attention to other, related systems). Social work recognizes that each person brings to the helping situation a set of behaviours, needs, and beliefs that are the result of his or her unique experiences from birth. Yet it also recognizes that whatever is brought to the situation must be related to the world as that person confronts it. By focusing on transactions between the person and his or her environment, social interaction can be improved. In sum, social workers temporarily enter the lives of their clients to help them improve their transactions with important elements of their environment.

2. "Social work is the attempt to assist those who do not command the means to human subsistence in acquiring them and in attaining the highest possible degree of independence" (Crouch, 1979).
3. "The profession of social work by both traditional and practical definition is the profession that provides the formal knowledge base, theoretical concepts, specific functional skills, and essential values which are used to implement society's mandate to provide safe, effective and constructive social services" (NASW, 1981).
4. "Social work is an applied science of helping people achieves an effective level of psychosocial functioning" (Barker, 1995).
5. "The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance social 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. Fundamental to social work is attention to the environmental forces that create, contribute to, and address problems in living" (NASW, 1996).
6. "The social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilizing theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work" (IFSW, 2004).
7. "Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing" (IFSW, 2014).

Social work is a *professional* and *academic* discipline committed to the pursuit of social welfare and social change. It is a field of study that has uniquely blended perspectives from other disciplines, particularly the *biological and social sciences*, with its own values, knowledge and skills. Education for the profession requires foundational understanding of *human needs, social problems, social welfare responses, consumers of social services and professional interventions as well as developing skills to facilitate change and assimilating a social work value orientation*. In short, students, early in their educational experience, want to know *the who, the what and the why of social work*.

Social work is a profession charged with fulfilling the *social welfare mandate of promoting well-being and quality of life*. Thus, social work encompasses activities directed at improving human and social conditions and alleviating human distress and social problems. Social workers, as *caring professionals*, work with people to enhance their competence and functioning, to access social supports and resources, to create humane and responsive social services and to expand the structures of society that provide opportunities for all citizens.

Social work profession exists to provide humane and effective social service to individuals, families, groups, communities and society so that social functioning may be enhanced and the qualities of life improved. Social work *is an activity* that seeks to help individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities engage resources that will alleviate human problems. In essence, social work activities empower client systems to enhance their competence and enable social structures to relieve human suffering and remedy social problems. Social work is concerned, too, with enabling clients to develop capacities and strengths that will improve their social functioning. Social work in its various forms addresses the multiple, complex transactions between people and their environments. Its mission is to enable all people to develop their full potential, enrich their lives, and prevent dysfunction. Professional social work is focused on problem solving and change. *Social work is an active, "doing" profession* that brings about positive change in problem situations through problem solving or prevention. As such, social workers are change agents in society and in the lives of the individuals, families and communities they serve.

#### **1.1.1. How to Conceptualize Social Work?**

Conceptualization of social work profession can be seen from such points as *fields of practice, practice setting, agency type, function performed, client population served, methods used, practice goals, service provided, and types of presenting problems*.

On the basis of the *fields of practice*, social work can be health, mental health, HIV, disability, etc., whereas the *practice setting* of social work profession can be community, courts, schools, and so forth. By the *agency type*, social work can be categorized as NGOs, government, association, etc. In the other dimensions, we can conceptualize social work as direct services, supervision, coordination, etc, based on the *functions* while on the basis of *client population* served, we can have such varieties as homeless people, OVC, people with mental illness, etc. Still the *methods* used can help to conceptualize social work as social group work, case work, community work, and the like whilst the *goals of the practice* enable us to evaluate social work whether it is intended to address the issue of prevention, problem resolution, symptom alleviation, development, or transformative. The *services* provided also contribute to classified the profession as mental therapy, case management, or discharge planning; and finally the *types of the problems* presented by the social worker can help us to see the profession as focusing on marital discord, depression, unemployment, and so forth.

### **1.1.2. Who are Professional Social Workers?**

The term *social worker* is generally applied to graduates of educational program (at least bachelor's degree) in social work who are employed in the field of social welfare. A *social worker* is a change agent, a helper who is specifically employed for the purpose of creating planned change. To do so social workers help people increase their capacity for problem solving and coping and they help them obtain need resources, facilitate interactions between individuals and between people and their environments, make organizations responsible to people, and influence social policies. In broad terms, social workers are caring professionals having valuable personal and professional qualities and work with in partnership with both the clients and colleagues.

#### **1. Caring Professionals**

Often, social workers describe themselves as *professional "helpers"*- helping others resolve problems and obtain resources, providing support during crises and facilitating social responses to needs. They are professionals to the degree that they have mastered the requisite knowledge base, developed competencies in the requisite skills and adhere to the values and ethics of the social work profession. Social workers summarily can be described as professional helpers designated by society to aid people who are distressed, disadvantaged, disabled, deviant, defeated or dependent. They are also charged to help people lessen their chances of being poor, neglected, abused, divorced, delinquent, criminal, alienated or mad. Indeed, the chief mandate of the social work profession is *to work with people who are disenfranchised and oppressed*. Social workers are organized into local, national, continental and international professional bodies.

Social work professionals share similar orientations toward values. They hold others in positive regard and demonstrate a genuine concern about the well-being of others. Altruism, or an unselfish regard for others, energizes their other-directedness. Moreover, effective helping professionals are optimistic about the potential for change and about life in general. Realistic hopefulness motivates change processes. Above all, they have a vision of the future based on the ideal of social justice.

#### **2. Valuable Personal Qualities**

Our personal qualities make a difference in our ability to work effectively with others. Likewise, social worker's personal characteristics enhance their ability to function professionally. Among these essential personal qualities are warmth, honesty, genuineness, openness, courage, hopefulness, humility, concern, and sensitivity. In his book *Learning from Clients*, Maluccio (1979) indicates that clients respond more to social workers' human qualities than to their technical skills. These qualities are indispensable for establishing rapport and building relationships with colleagues and clients alike.

#### **3. Working in Partnerships**

Social workers value working in partnerships with both their clients and their colleagues. Social work practice involves facilitating change- in other words, working with others, not doing something to them or for them. Empowering practitioners appreciate differences, celebrate diversity and value people for their own uniqueness. Effective social workers are trustworthy, act responsibly, demonstrate sound judgment and are accountable for their actions.

### **1.1.3. Is Social Work an Art, Science or Profession?**

For social work is an art as well as a scientifically based profession. Social work can also be defined as an *art, a science, a profession* that helps people to solve personal, group, family, and community problems and to attain satisfying personal, group and community organization, administration and research. The major focus is to help people to solve and prevent problems in human relationships and on enriching the way of living through improved human interaction. Certainly the main focus of the social worker is upon helping people to improve or strength their social functioning, their ability to interact and relate to others.

Social work is *an art*; it requires great skills to understand people and to help them to help themselves. The art is usually brought by the person to the helping profession and while it can be coached and refined, if a student wants to be a social worker did not have basic social skills and a sincere desire to help others, it is impossible to learn through an educational process.

Social work is a *science* because of its problem-solving method and its attempt to be objective in ascertaining fact and in developing principles and operational concepts. Much of the science can be learned through studying, writing papers and learning about agencies and how to do social work. The scientific base of social work consists of three types of knowledge: a) tested knowledge, b) hypothetical knowledge that requires transformation into tested knowledge and c) assumptive knowledge (practice wisdom) that requires transformation in to hypothetical and then into tested knowledge.

Social work is *a profession* because it encompasses the attributes of a profession. Social work is a profession and discipline, scientific in method artful in manner, which takes remedial action on problems in several areas of society. Social work is both *a field* and *a method*. Social work is a profession and it is concerned with doing. The study of social work largely deals with skills, techniques and theories for working with individuals, groups, communities and organizations.

Social work is not a philosophy-but the art of social work is based on science and on philosophy. The social worker is a practitioner, not a philosopher, but he is inevitably involved in philosophical considerations. For example, client self-determination is basically a philosophical concept. It refers to the freedom of man in a specific segment of life, namely, man as a client in a social welfare agency. The concept of values is basically philosophical. It is the relationship of "objects" to norms, standards, goals and objectives of life.

### **1.2. The Philosophy of Social Work or the Why of Social Work**

Imagine *a society without human suffering*. If the world were a perfect place, it would provide for every one warm and safe housing, an adequate supply of nutritious food, good health care and love and caring from friends and family. It would be a world with minimal stress, crime and suffering. All people would find their lives satisfying and fulfilling. But, *human societies are not perfect*. Social problems emerge that require societal solutions, and human needs arise that must be satisfied. Interrupting normal developmental processes by personal crises, poverty, unemployment, poor health and inadequate education jeopardizes the well-being of individuals. The prevalence of inequity, discrimination and other forms of social injustice compromises the well-being of society.

*Social work exists because the world is less than perfect*. Social workers serve people and the institutions of society as they confront this *imperfection*. They respond to both the demands of living in a changing society and the call for social justice to promote citizen's rights. In practice, social workers address social concerns that threaten the structures of society and redress social conditions that adversely affect the well-being of people and society.

The basis of all social work is *the deficiency of every legal organization of society*. A perfectly functioning organization of the whole society, a social mechanism embracing all mankind would *not leave room for social work*, but such a mechanism is unimaginable. It is prevented by two factors, one which is rooted in what we call today in philosophical jargon "*man's existential predicament*" his insufficiency. The second factor is rooted in *man's existential nature*, the uniqueness of every individual and every situation.

Social work is based on *humanitarian and democratic ideals*. Professional social workers are dedicated to service for the welfare of mankind, to the disciplined use of a recognized body of

knowledge about human beings and their interactions and to the marshalling of community resources to promote the well-being of all without discrimination.

The purpose of social work is to enable the people to use the social resources to meet their life tasks. *Life* means to face the demands of day to day life and realize the self. By *life tasks* we mean the responses people make as they face the demands made up on the various life situations, such as growing up in a family, entering school or work, raising a family, earning their daily bread, working in the industry, problems relating to job, facing illness, accidents and death.

People are dependent on social systems to realize their aspirations and to cope with their life tasks. In order to realize their life tasks people have to interact with three kinds of resource systems in the social environment

1. Informal or natural resource system consists of family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, etc
2. Formal resource system consists of membership in organizations, trade union organizations or other socio cultural organizations
3. Social resource system such as schools, hospitals, housing societies, police, banks etc

Why people are unable to obtain the resources, services or opportunities in the resource systems, they need to cope with their life tasks and realize their aspirations?

1. A needed resource or service may be scarce or may not exist or may not provide appropriate help to people who need it.
2. People may not know the existence of a resource system or may be hesitant to turn it for help for several reasons like distance, corruption, delay or poor quality etc
3. The policies and procedures of the resource system may inhibit/prevent it access (e.g. eligibility criteria, gender, etc). Hence, the purpose of social work is to enable the people to use the social resources to meet their life tasks.

### **1.3. Purpose/Mission of Social Work**

While social work practice require considerable variation in activity, at more abstract level the profession has consistently maintained that its fundamental mission is directly serving the people at need and at the same time making social institutions responsive to people. One way to identify the boundaries of social work is to identify its primary purpose. The National Association of Social Workers' "working statement on purpose" (1981) defines the unifying purpose or mission of social work as *promoting or restoring a mutually beneficial interaction between individuals and society in order to improve the quality of life for everyone*. Social work is known for its integrated view, which focuses on persons in the context of their physical and social environments. In fact, the purpose of social work lends vision to their work and provides the direction for their professional goals and objectives. The purpose of social work orients their activities as they work with clients to develop solutions in the context of a continuum of strengths and needs.

In response to the mission of the profession, social workers strengthen human functioning and enhance the effectiveness of the structures in society that provide resources and opportunities for citizens. Social workers strive to release human power so that individuals can actualize their potential and contribute to the well-being of society. Moreover, social workers initiate activities that release the social power that creates changes in society that in turn create changes in social policies, social institutions and other social structures in society.

#### **1. Caring**

Throughout their history social workers have sought to improve the quality of life for the most vulnerable groups in the population like, the disabled, elderly, terminally ill, and other persons with limited capacity for social functioning. Yet the victims of these conditions deserve not only humane but high quality care (i.e. restricted to the trained professionals in the field).

Caring that makes people comfortable and helps them cope with their limitations is frequently the most valuable service a social worker can provide. This caring activity may take the forms of making social provisions available to people such as, arranging for meal to be delivered, or for income to be supplemented, and assuring that adequate housing is provided or it may take a form of personal service such as counselling. There is also an important leadership role for social work in helping communities

create the necessary services to provide such care. The fundamental intention of caring for those in need continuous to be a central purpose of social work practice.

## **2. Curing**

Another trust of social work practice has been to provide treatment for individuals and families experiencing problems in social functioning. Depending on the client needs, direct services practice ranging from psycho therapy to behavioural modification, reality therapy, crisis intervention and various group and family therapy approaches are used by social workers. These approaches do not automatically cure social problems in the same way a physician might prescribe a medication to cure an infection. In fact most social workers would argue that at best they can only help clients cure themselves.

## **3. Changing society**

Social change is the third primary purpose of social work. Social workers are committed to reforming the existing laws, procedures and attitudes until they are more responsive to human needs. Many pioneer social workers were active reformers who worked to improve conditions in slum, hospitals and poor houses. Currently social workers actively influence social legislation in an effort to create new social programs or to charge factors that contribute to damaging social conditions such as racism, sexism and poverty.

Social workers also seek to change negative public attitudes about the more vulnerable members of society by providing public education and facilitating the empowerment of the affected members of the population to advocate for their own interest. Social workers, then, bring about change in the society by representing the interest of their client and/or helping clients convince decision makers at the local, state or national level to respond to human needs.

Specifically, the following core purposes of social work have been identified:

- To assist and mobilize individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities to enhance their well being and their problem-solving capacities;
- To seek out, identify and strengthen the maximum potentials of individuals, families, groups and communities;
- To identify potential disequilibrium and to prevent the occurrence of the disequilibrium;
- Assist and educate people to obtain services and resources in their communities;
- Facilitate the inclusion of marginalized, socially excluded, dispossessed, vulnerable and at-risk groups of people;
- Address and challenge barriers, inequalities and injustices that exist in society;
- Formulate and implement policies and programmes that enhance people's well being promote development and human rights, and promote collective social harmony and social stability, insofar as such stability does not violate human rights;
- Encourage people to engage in advocacy with regard to pertinent local, national, regional and/or international concerns;
- Advocate for, and/or with people, the formulation and targeted implementation of policies that are consistent with the ethical principles of the profession;
- Advocate for, and/or with people, changes in those policies and structural conditions that maintain people in marginalized, dispossessed and vulnerable positions, and those that infringe the collective social harmony and stability of various ethnic groups, in so far as such stability does not violate human rights;
- Work towards the protection of people who are not in a position to do so themselves, for example children and youth in need of care and persons experiencing mental illness or mental retardation within the parameters of accepted and ethically sound legislation;
- Engage in social and political action to impact social policy and economic development, and to effect change by critiquing and eliminating inequalities;
- Enhance stable, harmonious and mutually respectful societies that do not violate people's human rights;
- Promote respect for traditions, cultures, ideologies, beliefs and religions amongst different ethnic groups and societies, insofar as these do not conflict with the fundamental human rights of people;
- Plan, organize, administer and manage programmes and organizations dedicated to any of the purposes delineated above.

#### **1.4. Goals of the Social Work Practice**

The goals of the social work practice translate its general purpose in to more specific directions for action. These goals and objectives lead social workers to enhance *client's sense of competence, link them with resources and foster changes* that make organizations and social institutions more responsive to citizens' needs.

The National Association of Social Workers (1982) has conceptualized social work practice as having four major goals. In addition, the council on social work education (1992a, 1992b) has formulated a closely, but somewhat different conceptualizations of the purpose of social work practice which adds two more goals to the list.

##### **Goal 1: Enhance people's problem solving, coping and developmental capacities**

To accomplish this goal, practitioners assess obstacles to clients' ability to function. They also identify resources and strengths, enhance skills for dealing with problems in living, develop plans for solutions and support clients' efforts to create changes in their lives and situations. Using the *person: environment* concept, the focus of social work practice at this level is on the "person." With this focus, a social worker serves primarily as enabler where he or she will be taking the activity of counsellor, teacher care giver (provide supportive support for those who cannot fully solve their problems and meet their own needs) and behaviour changer that works for changing a specific parts of a client behaviour).

##### **Goal 2: Link people with systems that provide them with resources, services and opportunities.**

On one level, achieving this goal mains helping clients locate the resources they need to deal more effectively with their situations. On another level, this means that social workers advocate policies and services that provide optimal benefits, improve communication among human service professionals who represent various programs and services and identify gaps and barriers in social services that need to be addressed. Using the *person: environment* concept, the focus of social work practice at this level is on the relationships between individuals and the systems they interact with. With this focus the social worker serves primarily as agent/ broker.

##### **Goal 3: Promote effective and humane operation of systems that provide people with resources and services.**

This goal means that social workers must ensure that the system that delivers social services is humane and adequately provides resources and services for participants. To accomplish this, social workers advocate planning that centers on clients, demonstrates effectiveness and efficiency and incorporates measures of accountability. The focus of social work at this level is on the systems people interact with. There are different roles a social worker may fill at this level including:

- **Advocator:** advocate for the change of policies and programs to make them responsive to clients.
- **Program developer:** The worker seeks to promote or design programs or technologies to meet social needs.
- **Supervisor:** The worker seeks to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the delivery of services through supervising other staff.
- **Coordinator:** workers seek to improve a delivery system by increasing communication and coordination between human service resources.
- **Consultant:** the workers seek to provide guidance to agencies & organization by suggesting ways to increase the effectiveness & efficiency of services.

##### **Goal 4: Promoting social justice through developing and improving social policy**

With respect to developing social policies, social workers examine social issues for policy implications. They may suggest new policies and recommendations for eliminating policies that are no longer productive. Additionally, social workers translate general policies in to programs and services that respond effectively to participants. Similar to goal three, the focus of social work practice at this level is on the system people interact with. The distinction between goal three and goal four is that the focus on the previous is on the available resource for serving people while the later focus on the statuses and broader social policies that under lie such resources. The major roles at this level are planner and policy developer. In these roles workers develop and seek adaptation of new policies and propose elimination of ineffective or in appropriate one.

**Goal 5: Empower groups at risk and promote social and economic justice**

Groups at risk may differ from one society to another, for examples in Ethiopian society include the poor, the elderly, the women, and the minority groups (based on different bases like ethnicity, religion and others). Social workers have an obligation to help groups at risk increase their personal, interpersonal, socio- economic and political strength and influence through improving their circumstances. Empowerment focused social workers seek a more equitable distribution of resources and power among the various groups in society.

**Goal 6: Develop and test professional knowledge and skills**

Social workers are expected to contribute to the knowledge and skill base of social work practice. Included in this expectation is the responsibility of social workers to objectively assess their own practice, and to assess the programs and services they provide. Practitioners engage in research to further the knowledge and skill base of social work. Effective and ethical social work depends on practitioners using research-based theory and methods as well as contributing to the knowledge base of the professional through their own research and evaluation activities.

**1.5. Functions of Social Work**

Boehm, in a paper on the nature of social work, describes the functions of social work as threefold: restoration, provision of resources and prevention. These basic functions of social work are intertwined and interdependent.

**Restoration:** the function of restoration seeks to identify, control, or eliminate factors in the interactional process which cause breakdown or impairment of social relationships. Restoration of impaired social functioning may be subdivided into *curative and rehabilitative* aspects. Its curative aspects are to eliminate factors that have caused breakdown of functioning and, its rehabilitative aspects, to reorganize and rebuild interactional patterns. Examples of restoration include helping a rejected lonely child to be placed in a foster home. The rehabilitative aspect might be helping or supporting the child as he or she adjusts to the new foster home.

**Provision of Resources:** is concerned with the creation, enrichment, improvement and coordination of social resources. Provision of resources, social and individual, for more effective social functioning may be subdivided into *developmental and educational*. The developmental aspects are designed to further the effectiveness of existing social resources or to bring to full flower personal capacity for more effective social interaction. The educational spectrum is designed to acquaint the public with specific conditions and needs for new or changing social resources. Example, counselling services are described as a resource in alleviating marriage and family problems.

**Prevention as a New Direction: The Future of Social Work**

**Prevention: An Evolving Concept Going into the Twenty-First Century**

At present there is considerable interest in prevention in social work practice, and this interest is filtering into the educational process. Within more recent years social work educators and practitioners have developed considerable interest in prevention and have conceptualized some of their ideas.

Prevention is a word used in many different ways. It indicates action that staves off something from happening. Stated positively, it is the process of action taken so that antisocial behaviour or personal, family or community problems are minimized or do not arise at all. Theoretically, it means the doing of something so that personal and social pathology will not develop. The National Commission on Social work practice of the National Association of Social Workers defined prevention in social work as “activities which have merit in averting, or discouraging the development of specific social problems, or in delaying or controlling the growth of such problems after they have presented beginning symptoms.” Prevention consists of early discovery, control and elimination of conditions that could hamper effective social functioning.

Broadly speaking, prevention in relation to social work may be regarded in two ways: first, proper action taken so that the personal, family or community problems do not arise at all (*prevention of problems in the area of interaction between individuals and groups*); and secondly, action taken so that personal, family and community problems are not repeated even though such problems existed at the outset (*prevention of social ills*). Prevention is concerned with keeping the vase intact, rather than

trying to repair the broken pieces. It is interested in keeping human personalities and human interrelationships operating on an integrated and mature level, rather than in gluing together human parts that may have been cracked, broken apart or splintered. For example, premarital counseling would be an example of an attempt to prevent and social problems in relation to social functioning. Prevention of social ills ordinarily falls within the area of community organization. For example, the use of community services council approach to the reduction of juvenile delinquency through the utilization of all community organizations and economic resources.

The National Association of Social Workers has been very much interested in the whole area and process of prevention. In 1962, a pioneering report on "prevention and treatment" contained a pertinent statement with an introduction as follows:

The basic concern of social work with prevention arises out of the profession's service commitment. If the social pathology with which most social workers deal could be prevented, then many individuals would be spared destructive experiences and society would benefit. This in itself is important enough to justify greater efforts toward the further development of effective prevention. If, for example, it is possible to prevent the disintegration of families rather than merely aiding members of the disintegrated family group to deal with affects of separation, who would deny the worthiness of the preventative efforts.

## **1.6. Foundation Competencies and Behaviour Skills for the Social Work Profession**

### **Five Core Social Work Competencies**

#### ***Human behaviour and Social Environment***

Social work education programs provide content on the reciprocal relationships between human behavior and social environments. Content includes empirically based theories and knowledge that focus on the interactions between and among individuals, groups, societies, and economic systems. It includes theories and knowledge of biological, sociological, cultural, psychological, and spiritual development across the life span; the range of social systems in which people live (individual, family, group, organizational, and community); and the ways social systems promote or deter people in maintaining or achieving health and well-being.

#### ***Social Work Practice***

Social work practice is anchored in the purposes of the social work profession and focuses on strengths, capacities, and resources of client systems in relation to their broader environments. Students learn practice content that encompasses knowledge and skills to work with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. This content includes engaging clients in an appropriate working relationship, identifying issues, problems, needs, resources, and assets; collecting and assessing information; and planning for service delivery. It includes using communication skills, supervision, and consultation. Practice content also includes identifying, analyzing, and implementing empirically based interventions designed to achieve client goals; applying empirical knowledge and technological advances; evaluating program outcomes and practice effectiveness; developing, analyzing, advocating, and providing leadership for policies and services; and promoting social and economic justice.

#### ***Social Welfare Policy***

Programs provide content about the history and current structures of social welfare services, and the role of policy in service delivery, social work practice, and attainment of individual and social well-being. Course content provides students with knowledge and skills to understand major policies that form the foundation of social welfare; analyze organizational, local, state, national, and international issues in social welfare policy and social service delivery; analyze and apply the results of policy research relevant to social service delivery; understand and demonstrate policy practice skills in regard to economic, political, and organizational systems, and use them to influence, formulate, and advocate for policy consistent with social work values; and identify financial, organizational, administrative, and planning processes required to deliver social services.

#### **Research**

Qualitative and quantitative research content provides understanding of a scientific, analytic, and ethical approach to building knowledge for practice. The content prepares students to develop, use, and effectively communicate empirically based knowledge, including evidence-based interventions.

Research knowledge is used by students to provide high-quality services; to initiate change; to improve practice, policy, and social service delivery; and to evaluate their own practice.

**Field Education**

Field education is an integral component of social work education anchored in the mission, goals, and educational level of the program. It occurs in settings that reinforce students' identification with the purposes, values, and ethics of the profession; fosters the integration of empirical and practice-based knowledge; and promotes the development of professional competence. Field education is systematically designed, supervised, coordinated, and evaluated on the basis of criteria by which students demonstrate the achievement of program objectives.

**COMPETENCY 1: Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly**

Social workers serve as representatives of the **profession, its mission, and its core values**. They know the profession's history. Social workers commit themselves to the profession's enhancement and to their own professional conduct and growth.

**COMPETENCY 2: Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.**

Social workers have an obligation to conduct themselves ethically and to engage in ethical decision-making. Social workers are knowledgeable about the value base of the profession, its ethical standards, and relevant law.

**COMPETENCY 3: Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.**

Social workers are knowledgeable about the principles of logic, scientific inquiry and reasoned discernment. They use critical thinking augmented by creativity and curiosity. Critical thinking also requires synthesis and communication of relevant information

**COMPETENCY 4: Engage diversity and difference in practice.**

Social Workers understand how diversity characterizes and shapes the human experience and is critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the inter-sectionality of multiple factors including age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, immigration status, political ideology, religion, and sex. Social workers appreciate that, as consequences of difference, a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization and alienation as well as privilege, power and acclaim.

**COMPETENCY 5: Advance human rights and social and economic justice.**

Each person, regardless of position in society, has basic human rights, such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care and education. Social workers recognize the global interconnections of oppression and are knowledgeable about theories of justice and strategies to promote human and civil rights. Social work incorporates social justice practices in organizations, institutions and society to ensure that these basic human rights are distributed equitably and without prejudice.

**COMPETENCY 6: Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.**

Social workers use practice experience to inform research, employ evidence-based interventions, evaluate their own practice and use research findings to improve practice, policy and social service delivery. Social workers comprehend quantitative and qualitative research and understand scientific ethical approaches to building knowledge.

**COMPETENCY 7: Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.**

Social workers are knowledgeable about human behavior across the life course, the range of social systems in which people live and the ways social systems promote or deter people in maintaining or achieving health and well-being. Social workers apply theories and knowledge from the liberal arts to understand biological, social, cultural, psychological and spiritual development.

**COMPETENCY 8: Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work service.**

Social work practitioners understand that policy affects service delivery, and they actively engage in policy practice. Social workers know the history and current structures of social policies and services, the role of policy in service delivery, and the role of practice in policy development.

**COMPETENCY 9: Respond to contexts that shape practice.**

Social workers are informed, resourceful and proactive in responding to evolving organizational, community and societal contexts at all levels of practice. Social workers recognize that the context of practice is dynamic and use knowledge and skill to respond proactively.

**COMPETENCY 10: Engage, assess, intervene and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities.**

Professional practice involves dynamics and interactive processes of engagement, assessment, intervention and evaluation at multiple levels. Social workers have the knowledge and skills to practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. Practice knowledge includes identifying, analyzing and implementing evidenced-based interventions designed to achieve client goals, using research and technological advances, evaluating program outcomes and practice effectiveness, developing, analyzing, advocating, and providing leadership for policies and services, and promoting social and economic justice.

<b>Foundation Competency</b>	<b>Practice variables/ Expected outcomes</b>
1. Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Advocate for client access to the services of social work</li> <li>2. Practice personal self reflection and self-correction to assure continual professional development</li> <li>3. Attend to professional roles and boundaries</li> <li>4. Demonstrate professional demeanour in behaviour, appearance and communication</li> <li>5. Engage in career-long learning</li> <li>6. Use of supervision and consultation</li> </ol>
2: Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice</li> <li>2. Make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics</li> <li>3. Tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts</li> <li>4. Apply strategies of ethical reasoning to arrive at principled decisions</li> </ol>
3: Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Distinguish, appraise, and integrate multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge and practice wisdom</li> <li>2. Analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention and evaluation</li> <li>3: Demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities &amp; colleagues</li> </ol>
4: Incorporate diversity and difference into practice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1: Recognize the extent to which a culture's structure and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, create or enhance privilege and power</li> <li>2: Gain sufficient self awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups</li> <li>3: Recognize and communicate their understanding of importance of difference in shaping experience</li> <li>4: View themselves as learners and engage those with whom they work as informants</li> </ol>
5: Advance human rights and social and economic justice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1: Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination</li> <li>2: Advocate for human rights and social and economic justice</li> <li>3: Engages in practices that advance social and economic justice</li> </ol>
6: Engage in research informed practice and practice informed research	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1: Use practice experience to inform scientific inquiry</li> <li>2: Use research evidence to inform practice</li> </ol>
7. Apply knowledge of human behaviour and the social environment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1: Utilize conceptual frameworks to guide the processes of assessment, intervention and evaluation</li> <li>2: Critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment</li> </ol>
8: Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1: Analyze, formulate and advocate for policies that advance social well-being</li> <li>2: Collaborate with colleagues and clients for effective policy action</li> </ol>

9: Respond to contexts that shape practice	1: Continuously discover, appraise, and attend to changing locales, populations, scientific and technological developments and emerging societal trends to provide relevant services 2: Provide leadership in promoting sustainable changes in service delivery and practice to improve the quality of social services.
10: Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities	1: Able to demonstrate engagement by using interpersonal skills 2: Able to demonstrate assessment by analyzing strengths and limitations, identify treatment goals and plan Interventions 3: Able to develop interventions that resolve problems by using negotiation, mediation and advocacy 4: Analyses and evaluates outcomes of interventions and facilitates terminations and endings

### 1.7. Basic Concepts in Social Work

#### Social Welfare

The term social welfare has different meanings, as it is both an *institution* and an *academic discipline*. NASW defines *social welfare as an institution*-a nation's system of programs, benefits and services that help people meet those social, economic, educational, and health needs that are fundamental to the maintenance of society. Social welfare programs and social service organizations are sometimes referred to as social welfare institutions. The purposes of social welfare institutions are to prevent, alleviate or contribute to the solution of recognized social problems in order to directly improve the wellbeing of individuals, groups, families, organizations and communities. Social welfare institutions are established by policies and laws with the programs and services being provided by voluntary (private) and governmental (public) agencies. The encyclopaedia of social work states that social welfare is for the purpose of ensuring basic standard of physical and mental wellbeing and providing universal access to the main stream of society.

Another meaning of social welfare derives from its role as an academic discipline. In this context, social welfare is the study of agencies, programs, personnel, and policies which focus on the delivery of social services to individuals, groups and communities. One of the functions of the social welfare discipline is to educate and train social workers.

The goal of social welfare is to fulfil the social, financial, health and recreational requirements of all individuals in a society. Social seeks to enhance the social functioning of all groups, both rich and poor.

#### *Social Work and Social Welfare*

Social welfare and social work are historically related and are sometimes still used synonymously. Social welfare refers to the full range of organized activities of public and voluntary agencies that seek to prevent, alleviate or contribute to solving a selected set of social problems. When other institutions in any society (such as the market economy and the family) fail at aims to meet the basic needs of individuals or groups of people, social services are needed and demanded.

Social work is the primary profession that works within the social welfare system and within those the system serves. Almost all social workers are employed in the social welfare field. Social workers implement planned social change activities prescribed by social welfare institutions. There are, however, many other professionals and occupational groups working in the field like, teachers, physicians, psychologists, nurses, attorney, recreational therapists and planners. Depending on the need being addressed, the helpers must have various kinds of knowledge and unique competencies to effectively serve their clients. As the knowledge and skill requirements have become more than any person can master, a division of labour has occurred and several helping professions have evolved to provide these programs. One of these professions is social work. Social workers unique contribution among the helping professions is to assist individuals to interact more effectively with the people and social institutions that are important parts of their lives.

Social welfare in contrast to social work is a system or institution (set of established practices) within a given nation. The purpose of this institution is not only to help individual people needs but also to help the nation as a whole to maintain stability. Social work is really only one profession among many that can be considered part of institution of social welfare. Here, social work may be said to stand at the

interface between the individual and social institutions. Ideally social work knowledge, skills, and values are used to help individuals adapt to social institution. In turn, social work seeks to modify social institution to meet human needs.

## **2. Diversity**

The social work profession is an extremely diverse profession that has worked to embrace diversity throughout its existence. The social work profession, like society in general, faces discrimination in the form of sexism, ageism, ableism, and ethnocentrism. In an effort to counter these societal ills, the social work profession has embraced diversity and culturally competent practice. Diversity of populations served, diversity of skills and knowledge, and diversity of services and programs provided characterize the mission of the social work profession.

Diversity has become essential to the social work profession's fundamental mission, which is to serve people in need and simultaneously to make social institutions more responsive to people and their problems. Social workers view diversity favorably and acknowledge the variation within the profession as an enriching quality. Essentially, the diversity within the profession enables social workers to respond more adequately to human needs that exist within a fluid and dynamic world. Several definitions of diversity have been presented throughout social work literature.

The Social Work Dictionary defines diversity as: variety, or the opposite of homogeneity. In social organizations the term usually refers to the range of personnel who more accurately represent minority populations and people from varied backgrounds, cultures, ethnicities, and viewpoints. Environmentalists use term to indicate a variety of plant and animal forms in the area rather than a system in which only one or few species exist.

Lum (2003, p. 36) says that diversity focuses on the differences that make a person distinct and unique from another person. It offers an opportunity for a person to name those distinctions and invites another person to discover those particular qualities about that particular individual. It is an inclusive term that encompasses groups distinguished by ethnicity, culture, class, gender, religion, physical or mental ability, age, and national origin. As noted by these various definitions, diversity in fields of practice, diversity of clientele, diversity in knowledge and skills, diversity of services, and diversity in social and political policy perspectives characterize social work. Clearly, the social work profession has along history of involvement with issues of human diversity, albeit not always adequate or effective. Social work's concern with persons of various cultural, and ethnic identification tends to "ebb and flow."

## **3. Human Rights**

The principle of human rights is fundamental to social work. Human rights are inseparable from social work theory, values and ethics and practice. UN (1987) describes *human rights* as those rights which are inherent in our nature and without which we cannot live as human beings. Human rights and fundamental freedoms allow us to fully develop and use our human qualities, our intelligence, our talents and our conscience and to satisfy our spiritual and other needs. They are based on mankind's increasing demand for a life in which the inherent dignity and worth of each human being will receive respect and protection. Human rights are universal and apply to all persons without discrimination. All humans are born free and equal in dignity and rights. Respect for human rights and human dignity is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.

Within the UNDR, there are three areas of rights: *political and civil rights; social, economic, and cultural rights; and collective rights*. *Political and civil rights* are often referred to as "negative freedoms" as they require a government to refrain from an overuse of its power against individuals. Included in this are rights such as freedom of speech and the right to a fair trial. The second grouping of rights-social, economic, and social rights-are referred to as "positive freedoms" as they require a government to take action for them to be realized for individuals. They include such rights as medical care, the right to an education, and the right to a fair wage. The last group, collective rights, are rights for groups of people and include the rights to religion, peace, and development.

Jahan (2005, p. 2) states that "human development and human rights are closely linked as they have a common denominator-human freedom. They both relate to choices or the lack thereof for all to live their life as they would." Sustainable human development means expanding all people's choices and

creating the conditions for equality so that they may realize their full potential. This goal is unrealizable if all human rights-economic, social, cultural, civil and political-are not promoted, preserved and defended.

Three main barriers exist that prevent full access to human rights and the fruits of social development. These barriers are poverty, discrimination, and lack of education. The existence of poverty violates economic human rights-the right to an income adequate to sustain oneself. Poverty inherently prohibits access to the realization of social human rights. The lack of adequate income typically prohibits adequate housing, nutrition, and other necessities. Money confers independence and autonomy. Those living in poverty find their options are limited due to their lack of financial resources. This can create dependence on others or on the state to help them meet the basics needed for life, the basic human rights guaranteed to all humans. They are placed at further risk of violation of other rights through economic exploitation and discrimination due to their lack of financial resources to meet their basic needs.

Discrimination involves grouping people into a category and denying them full access to human rights based on that category. This category may be sex, gender, ethnicity, race, caste, social class, or any other categorization. While discrimination itself is a violation of human rights, these categories are used to deny access to other rights as well, including access to a job that pays a living wage, adequate medical care, a fair trial, and the right to vote. Lack of access to education is a larger problem than many of us realize: without an education, the individual is not only locked into poverty but also placed at risk for the issues discussed in this text. This is due not only to their lack of education, but also to the fact that school serves as a protective activity to help shield children from exposure to social risks. Also, a parent's education helps his or her children to be healthier and more prosperous, particularly in the case of mothers.

These three barriers are often intertwined and difficult to separate. People are locked into poverty due to their lack of education, and they do not have access to education due to their poverty. They may be systematically denied education due to discrimination.

#### **4. Social and Economic Justice**

The guiding notion is that "social workers challenge social injustice." Professionals are supposed to "pursue social change, particularly with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups." Social workers' reform efforts are to concentrate on issues of "poverty, unemployment, discrimination and other forms of social injustice." These activities seek to promote sensitivity to and knowledge about oppression. "Social workers strive to ensure access to needed services and resources, equality of opportunity, and meaningful participation for all people".

Under the heading of "Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to the Broader Society," justice comes in for further operationalization. "Social workers should," the codes and standards document (NASW, 2003) states,

- \* promote the general welfare of society, from local to global levels, and the development of people, their communities, and 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.
- \* facilitate informed participation by the public in shaping social policies and institutions.
- \* engage in social and political action that seeks to ensure that all people have equal access to 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.

In an effort to ground the concept of social justice in social work education, Davis (2004) provides the following cogent definition of social justice:

Social justice is a basic value and desired goal in democratic societies and includes equitable and fair access to all social institutions, laws, resources, opportunities, rights, goods, and services for all groups and individuals within arbitrary limitations or barriers based on observations or interpretations of the value of differences in age, culture, physical or mental ability, education, income language, national origin, or religion.

Barker (2003) defines social justice as: An ideal condition in which all members of a society have the same basic rights, protection, opportunities, obligations and social benefits. Implicit in this concept is

the notion that historical inequalities should be acknowledged and remedied through specific measures. A key social work value, social justice entails advocacy to confront discrimination, oppression, and institutional inequities. Social justice has also been defined as creating “equal access to resources, employment, services and opportunities that are required to meet their human needs and to develop fully”. Economic justice focuses on the inequity in the distribution of wealth, poverty, inequality and economic disparities.

Social justice is the organizing principle of the social work profession. It establishes the profession as a unique entity centered around the empowerment of people and the eradication of injustice on multiple levels. Acknowledged as a core area of emphasis in the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics (1999) and regarded as a staple within the Educational and Policy Accreditation Standards of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), social and economic justice is a critical component of what defines and shapes social work as a profession. Social justice is most often aligned with advocacy, empowerment practice, oppression, individual transformation, human and civil rights, and is inclusive of economic justice. Principles of social and economic justice, however, are evident in all forms of social work practice, research and education and are at the foundation of the values and ethics that shape the profession. As part of its commitment to a social justice approach, the profession has also embraced its role of confronting injustice.

Social injustices are those conditions or situations that oppress, withhold information, limit full and meaningful participation, establish and or maintain inequalities, structure the unequal distribution of resources, inhibit development and, in other ways, deny equal opportunities for all.

#### *Social Work Principles and Social Justice*

The social work profession espouses a number of principles that support a social justice approach. The profession advocates for the dignity and worth of every person. Each person is to be treated with respect and each is to be valued despite his or her circumstance or status. The profession also promotes the idea of equality and equal access to opportunities. Self-determination is another key value of the social work profession that, as an organizing principle, states that people have the right to decipher the course of their lives and make decisions for themselves despite the perspective or influence of the social worker. The profession also purports principles of freedom, that all people should be free of tyranny, free of violence, free of confinement, and free of stereotypes that hinder progress. The profession also supports the idea of autonomy, stressing that the role of the social work profession is to help people become self-sufficient and not reliant on outside resources to survive and thrive.

Reisch (2002) defines five principles of social justice as (1) holding the most vulnerable populations harmless in the distribution of societal resources, (2) mutuality, (3) emphasizing prevention, (4) stressing multiple ways of providing access to services and benefits, and (5) enabling clients to define their own situations and contribute to the development and evaluation of services. These principles form the basis for social work’s stance on social justice.

### **1.9. Values and Principles in Social Work**

#### **The Nature of Values**

Unlike knowledge, which explains what is, values express how things ought to be or how people ought to behave. Rokeach more precisely defines a value as “a type of belief, centrally located in one’s total belief system, about how one ought or ought not to behave, or about some end-state of existence worth or not worth attaining.” Values are beliefs, preferences or assumptions about what is desirable or good for men. Values are the implicit and explicit ideas about what we cherish as ideal or preferable. Consequently, values determine which goals and actions we evaluate as “good.” In short, values guide our thinking about how we should behave and what we want to accomplish. Values define norms or guidelines for behaviour. Our values shape our beliefs and attitudes, and, in turn, our beliefs and attitudes shape our values. Values are the fundamental criteria that lead us to thoughtful decisions.

At the heart of social work are its values. Values are the cornerstone of social work. Values are foundational to social work practice. Thus, social work is a value-based profession that incorporates “a constellation of preferences concerning what merits doing and how it should be done”. In fact, there are value and ethical dimensions to almost every aspect of social work. One cannot understand social work

without being sensitive to values. The social worker must be aware of the value system of the client or client group and the values held by society that impinge upon client. Values assist the social worker and the social work profession in setting goals related to both clients and society. Values represent a highly individual and personal view that must be constantly examined during practice.

All social work activities at any system levels and in any field of practice depend on interaction and communication with others. Social workers purposefully and spontaneously interact with clients and their communication unavoidably and automatically reveals their “frame of references” calling for acknowledgement of the complex, continuous and unavoidable nature of communication. Since social workers professionally constructed relationships are not merely role players but rather genuine relationships in which the values, beliefs, opinions of social workers and clients show through, therefore, social workers prepare themselves both personally and professionally for relationships with clients partially in the areas of values and diversity.

Everyone has got his/her own frame of reference. Thus, while animals use their instinct, human beings use their own frame of reference derived from culture, pattern of thinking, assumption, values, expectations of the self and others expectation and also the situation. Therefore, social workers as a human being uses their both frame of reference spontaneously and professional values that are deliberately planned. But sometimes we may find situations above frame of reference. Therefore, values may influence the decision but not influence the choice because there is rational choice (contrary to frame of reference-it believe on reason as endowed to human being by nature). This is the rationale behind the formation of ethics as values are made specific to influence choice as like law. This implies that if the social worker and the client have the same frame of reference (frame of work) may have good communication. So, social worker should recognize the client’s frame of reference.

### **Social Work Professional Values**

To achieve the objectives of the profession, social workers must be responsible partners in the change process. Their professional activities should be permeated with the values of the profession, founded on the purpose of social work, and guided by professional standards of ethical practice. The profession of social work is based on the values of service, social and economic justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, and integrity and competence in practice.

The value base of social work profession reflects fundamental beliefs about the nature of mankind, change and qualities that have intrinsic worth:

Since its central concern is humanness and the development of humanity, social work values must be radically humane—they must render up and strike at the roots of the human condition. At the very least, the values must include equality, social justice, freeing of life styles, rightful access to social resources and liberation of self-powers. These values require social workers to stand as liberators of human beings from constricting, obsolete and oppressive social situations.

Social work values focus on three general areas: *values about people, values about society and values that inform professional behaviour.*

#### ***Values about People***

The common values of the profession reflect social worker’s fundamental ideas about the nature of human kind and the nature of change—“the inherent dignity and worth of the person,” “access to needed information, services and resources” and “equality of opportunity.” Valuing the dignity and worth of all people regardless of their situations in life, cultural heritage, life-styles or beliefs is essential to practicing social work. Professional social workers maintain an unconditional positive regard for others by respecting diversity and accepting variations in personal life-styles. Social workers advocate clients’ rights to access services and participate in decision making. They integrate the principles of self-determination, non-judgmentalism and confidentiality in to their interactions with clients.

#### ***Values about Society***

Social workers champion social justice and value the democratic process. Social workers assume responsibility for confronting inequities and social injustice. They are professionally committed to making social institutions more humane and responsive to human needs. Improving social programs and

refining social policies reflect practitioners' commitment to improving societal conditions in ways that actualize social justice.

**Values about Professional behaviour**

Values guide the professional activities of social workers in their efforts with client systems. Social workers value client systems' strengths and competencies and work in partnership with clients to develop creative solutions. Social workers also value quality in their practice and continually examine their own practice effectiveness. Additionally, they take responsibility for ethical conduct and continual professional development.

**Core Values and Ethical Principles**

The profession of social work was founded on a set of core values and principles that still guide its unique purpose and perspective today. These core values include service, social justice, inherent dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and 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.

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**

Social work's 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.

**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**

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.

**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**

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 support client self-determination, that is, the right of individuals to make choices about their futures.

**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. Social workers are cognizant of their dual responsibility to clients and to the broader society. They seek to resolve conflicts between clients' interests and the broader society's interests in a socially responsible manner consistent with the values, ethical principles, and ethical standards of the profession.

**Value: Importance of Human Relationships**

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. They seek to strengthen relationships among people in a purposeful effort to promote, restore, maintain, and enhance well-being of individuals, families, social groups, organizations, and communities.

**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 wellbeing of individuals, families, social groups, organizations, and communities.

**Value: Integrity**

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 organizations with which they are affiliated.

**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**

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.

**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.

**Social Work Principles**

Social workers transform the abstract values of the profession in to principles for practice. Then they translate these principles in to concrete actions in specific situations. Values abstractly shape social workers ways of thinking and concretely direct their actions through principles for social worker practice. Professional ethics are at the core of social work. The profession has an obligation to articulate its basic values, ethical principles, and ethical standards.

Among these are the common principles are self determination, confidentiality, acceptance, individualization, non judgmental attitudes, objectivity, access resources, and accountability. When social workers fail to operational zing these principals, they victimize clients and disempowered them. Conversely, upholding these practice principle facilitates empowerment.

**1. Self-determination**

Social workers believe that clients have the right to express their own opinions to act up on them, as long as by so doing clients do not infringe on the rights of others. Self-determination draws logically from belief in the inherent dignity of each person, i.e. if people have dignity, then it follows that they should be permitted to determine their own lifestyles as far as possible. social workers believed that making all decisions and doing everything for the client is self – defeating, because it leads to increased dependence rather than greater self-reliance and self-sufficiency. People may do mistakes while making a decision that is part of life and we learn by our mistakes and by trial and error.

Self-determination means that the client, not the worker is the chief-problem solver. Workers need to recognize that the client owns the problem and therefore has a chief responsibility to resolve the problem. Here there is a remarkable difference between social workers and others. For example doctors and lawyers are experts in advising clients. This limits the clients' decision making choice to whether to accept the professional's advice. Social workers should not seek to establish an expert-

inferior or relationship but a relationship between equals. Self-determination doesn't prohibit or restrict social workers from offering an opinion or make a suggestion. In fact social workers have an obligation to share their view points with their clients. It is imperative, however, that the social worker's opinion or input be recognized as information to be considered and not an edict to be followed. The key to implement this principle is for the social worker, to phrase alternatives as suggestion rather than advice.

## **2. Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is the implicit or explicit agreement between a professional and a client that the professional will maintain the private nature of information about the client. An absolute implementation of this principle means that the professional will not share client disclosure with anyone else, except when authorized by the client or required by law. Because of this principle of confidentiality professionals can be sued if they disclose information that the client is able to document a damaging effect on him/her. One of the reasons confidentiality is important is the clients may not share their hidden secrets, personal concerns, and social thoughts and actions with a professional if they believe the information will be reviled to others. A basic principle of counselling is that clients must feel comfortable in fully reviling themselves to the professional without fear that their secret revelations will be used against them.

Confidentiality is absolute when information revealed to a professional is never passed on to any one in any form such information would never be shared with other agency staff, fed in to a computer or written in a case record. Absolute confidentiality, however, is seldom achieved. Social workers today generally function as part of a larger agency. Social workers share details with supervisors, many work in team and are expected to share information, therefore instead of, absolute confidentiality, it is more precise to indicate that a system of relative confidentiality is being used in social work practice.

However, in a number of other areas, a professional is permitted, expected or required, to violate confidentiality. These areas include:

- When a client formally authorizes the professional to release information.
- When a professional is called to testify in a criminal case ( still workers may not be expected to reveal all information and clients may have a right to privileged communication)
- When a client files a lawsuit against a professional ( e.g. mal practice )
- When a client threatens suicide and a professional may be forced to violate confidentiality to save the clients life.
- When a client threatens to harm his or her therapist.
- When there is evidence of child abuse or neglect.
- When a clients emotional or physical condition makes his or her employment a clear danger to itself or others. E.g. when a social worker discovers that a client who is an airplane pilot has a serious drinking problem).

In all these areas professional judgments must be used in deciding when their circumstances justify violating confidentiality.

## **3) Acceptance**

Acceptance implies that social workers understand client's perspectives and welcome their views. It also suggests building on client's strengths and recognizing the potential they each have for growth and changes. Social workers convey acceptance by expressing genuine concern, listening respectfully, acknowledging other points of view and creating clients of mutual respect. The principle of acceptance charges social workers to go beyond merely tolerating clients to regarding clients positively. Accepting workers treat clients with respect and dignity, realizing that clients have unique strengths and resources to offer. A Variety of factors block social workers communication of acceptance. These factors include lack of self- awareness, insufficient knowledge of human behavior, projection of personal perspectives on to client's situations, prejudicial attitudes, unwarranted reassurances and the confusion of acceptant with approval.

#### **4) Individualization**

Valuing individualization means recognizing that all human have a right “to be individuals as and to be treated not just as a human being but as this human being with personal differences. All people are unique and posses’ distinctive capacities. When social workers affirm client’s individuality, they recognize and appreciate their unique qualities and individuals differences. They treat clients as persons with rights and needs rather than as objects, “cases” or yet another appointment” social workers who individualize clients free themselves from bias and prejudice, avoid labeling and stereotyping and recognize the potential diversity. Social workers necessarily drawn on generalize information about people situations. However, they acknowledge that each client’s circumstances require adoptions of these general schemes. Social work practitioners work with this particular client in this particular situation. This principle translates into action that “being where the client is”. Social workers know that culture characteristics in only one of several individuals and group identities clients hold. Individual's members of any cultural group have distinctive stories to tell.

#### **5) Non- Judgmental Attitude**

The term non- judgmentalism may be confusing. Non- Judgmentalism signifies social workers non blaming attitudes and behaviors. Social workers do not judge others as good or bad, or worthy or unworthy. However, social workers do makes professionals judgments or decisions every day about alternative approaches and appropriates solutions among other issues. Stated in other words, non-judgmental social work "excludes assigning guilt or innocence or degree of clients’ responsibility for causation of the problems or needs but does includes making evaluative judgments about the attitudes, standards or action of the clients.

Non-Judgmentalism applied to all social work process. However certain circumstances- such as occasions when clients feel demoralized, Stigmatized or balm worthy- require especially sensitive non – Judgmentalism. In such situations clients’ own feelings of blame and judgment have heightened availability, therefore, they are likely to interpret others’ actions through that fitter of blame and judgments. Non-Judgmentalism is especially crucial in the initial stages since first impressions do count! Personals biases of practitioners may interfere as violating the principle.

#### **6. Objectivity**

The practice principle of objectivity or examining situations without bias is closely related to non-judgmentalism. To be objective, practitioners avoid injecting their personal feelings and prejudices into their relationships with clients slanted judgments way cause social workers to select or to encourage one out come over another in appropriately. Practitioners’ educational expectances understanding of the social world, life experiences, beliefs, values and physical predisposition all affect their objectivity.

#### **7. Access to Resource**

Having access to resources is prerequisite for developing solutions. Limited resources reduce options for solutions and without options people can't choose among alternatives. All people rely on resources to meet their challenges and realize their potential. Social workers have responsibility to ensure that every one has the resources, services and opportunities they require to expand choices and opportunities for people who are oppressed and disadvantaged and to improve social conditions and promote social justice by advocating legislative reforms. What makes this principle, from others is it starts from the social worker him/herself. That means first make resources inside the worker accessible then link clients to resources in the society.

#### **8. Accountability**

Accountability means that social workers must be competent in the methods and techniques they employee in their professionals practice. It means that workers take seriously their obligation to redress discriminatory and in humane practices, act with unquestionable profession integrity and implement sound practice and research protocols. Accountability extends to social workers ethical responsibilities to their clients, their colleagues and employing organizations, Society and the social workers must know relevant laws and their implication for social work practice.

## **2. Historical Development of Social Work**

### **2.1. Helping Professions: a Response to Human Need**

All professions began as a response to unmet human need. As people experienced suffering or insufficient development in some aspect of life, when natural helping networks were not sufficient to meet the resulting needs, various forms of professional help emerged. Physicians, teachers, clergy and other professional groups began to appear and to be given approval by the society to perform specific helping functions.

There was a time when each profession could respond to a number of human needs. For example, the clergy traditionally provided help for both spiritual and social needs. However, the increasingly specialized knowledge necessary to provide effective helping services has led to a proliferation of helping professions, each with its own specializations.

What are these needs to which the helping professions have responded? Brill's description of needs helps to clarify the primary focus of the several helping professions as they exist today:

- *Physical needs*: functioning of the physical structures and organic processes of the body (Physicians and Nurses)
- *Emotional needs*: feelings or affective aspects of the consciousness that are subjectively experienced (Psychologists)
- *Intellectual needs*: capacity for rational and intelligent thought (Teachers)
- *Spiritual needs*: desire for a meaning in life that transcends one's life on earth (Clergy)
- *Social needs*: capacity for satisfying relationships with others (Social Workers)

### **2.2. Social Work as a Profession: a Historical Perspective**

In order to understand and appreciate social work more fully, it is useful to trace its emergence and identify key historical events and professional actions that have shaped the profession. Tracing the historical roots of social work practice provides an understanding of our professional heritage and gives us a glimpse of the legacy left by early pioneers.

The growth and development of social work has not been a planned event. It has just happened in response to human suffering that began in several different parts of the world human society and eventually coalesced in to a single, diverse profession. Social work did not evolve in a vacuum. A series of events affected its development and will continue to shape social work in the future. Because its development has not been guided by a clear master plan, social work has been heavily influenced by a variety of factors.

While, on the one hand, one could gain insight in to the emergence of social work by examining the *influence of external events*, on the other hand, it can be possible by examining *social work's internal professional development*. It has been pushed in one direction by external forces such as periods of political and economic conservatism, the stress of wars and other major international events and by competition from other emerging helping disciplines. These events influenced decisions about the extent to which this society would respond to its members' social needs and subsequently to the social programs that would be supported. At the same time, social work has been pulled in other directions by its own goals and aspirations, such as the need for a coherent concept of the profession that could incorporate its different roots and its intense desire to be recognized as a profession.

Social work is a profession that has historically maintained a partisan commitment to working with the poor and the marginally dependent. Social work is firstly emerged in the twentieth century as an important profession in USA society. Its roots lie in *early social welfare activities, the charity organization movement and similar activities in the traditional small-scale societies*.

Social work is a helping profession which emerged out of historical periods and circumstances calling for practical interventions to improve human life conditions; initially started as a *voluntary activity*. Then *occupation* and at last *profession* being shaped and re-shaped by different historical social, economic and political situations in the process developing its unique perspectives and principles with a general goal of achieving human dignity and social justice.

## **Pre-modern History of Social Work**

*From Volunteers to an Occupation (prior to 1915)*

*Volunteerism: The Origin of Social Work*

Social work has its roots in the struggle of society to deal with poverty and the resultant problems. Therefore, social work is intricately linked with the idea of *charity work*; but must be understood in broader terms. The concept of charity goes back to ancient times, and the practice of providing for the poor has roots in all major world religions.

Social work as a profession grew chiefly out of the development of social welfare policies and programs in the United States, Europe, and Muslim countries. Judeo-Christian and Muslim practices and beliefs underlie many of the early attempts to provide help to the poor, the sick, widows, orphans, the “insane” and “imbeciles” (as those with problems of mental illness and developmental disability used to be called) and the elderly.

Simply stated, the profession of social work owes its existence to *volunteerism*. Volunteers founded relief societies, children’s homes, day care programs, recreation services, family and child welfare associations, and mental health associations. In other words, volunteers preceded social work in almost every field of practice. Many introductory texts on social work and social welfare recognize the profession’s origin in volunteerism. For example, Morales and Sheafor (2004) describe the beginning of social work as being “found in the extensive volunteer movement during the formative years of the United States”. In the colonial period, for example, it was assumed that individuals and families could care for themselves, but if further difficulties existed, one could depend on *mutual aid*. Friends, neighbors or other representatives of the community could be counted on to help out when needed. Volunteer activities involved interaction with the poor, the ill, and those experiencing other social problems. As social agencies began to develop, they soon learned how to train volunteers in constructive ways to relate to clients and improved their ability to be helpful. Developing out of this background came social work as an *occupation*.

## **Modern History of Social Work**

*Professional Emergence (1915-1950)*

With social work firmly established as an occupation, attention then turned to its development as a profession. The practice and profession of social work has a relatively modern (19th century) and scientific origin.

Social work is a phenomenon of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The movement began primarily in the United States and England. After the end of feudalism, the poor were seen as a more direct threat to the social order, and so the state formed an organized system to care for them. In England, the Poor Law served this purpose. This system of laws sorted the poor into different categories, such as the able bodied poor, the impotent poor, and the idle poor. This system developed different responses to these different groups.

Social work involves ameliorating social problems such as poverty and homelessness. The 19th century ushered in the Industrial Revolution. There was a great leap in technological and scientific achievement, but there was also a great migration to urban areas throughout the Western world. This led to many social problems, which in turn led to an increase in social activism.

Jane Addams (1860–1935) a founder of the U.S. Settlement House movement and is considered one of the early influences on professional social work in the United States. In America, the various approaches to social work led to a fundamental question is social work a profession? This debate can be traced back to the early 20th century debate between Mary Richmond's Charity Organization Society (COS) and Jane Adams's Settlement House Movement. The essence of this debate was whether the problem should be approached from COS' traditional, scientific method focused on efficiency and prevention or the Settlement House Movement's immersion into the problem, blurring the lines of practitioner and client.

Even as many schools of social work opened and formalized processes for social work began to be developed, the question lingered. In 1915, at the National Conference of Charities and Corrections, Dr. Abraham Flexner spoke on the topic "Is Social Work a Profession?" He contended that it was not

because it lacked specialized knowledge and specific application of theoretical and intellectual knowledge to solve human and social problems. Following Flexner's admonition to "go forth and build itself a profession" social workers busily worked on it. In 1957, Ernest Greenwood using the five critical attributes of the profession: a systematic body of theory, professional authority, sanction of the community, a regulative code of ethics and a professional culture concluded that social work was a profession. This led to the professionalization of social work, concentrating on case work and the scientific method, by developing a code of ethics, knowledge, skill and value base of the profession.

### **2.3. Brief History of Social Work Profession in Ethiopia**

#### **Emergence of Social Work Education in Ethiopia**

The first School of Social Work in Ethiopia was established in 1959. The school was a unit of Haile Selassie I University, now called Addis Ababa University. Under the auspices of the Ministry of Public Health and the United Nations Technical Assistance Board, the school offered a two-year diploma course at that time. Shortly thereafter, it was incorporated into the Faculty of Arts. In 1961, the School became an independent unit of the University, and in the same year it was accepted as a member of the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW).

In September 1966, the School started to offer a four-year program leading to a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree. The total enrolment of degree students was one hundred by 1971-1972, and it was estimated that the School would produce between fifteen to twenty graduates per year. During that time, there were about ten Ethiopians who had been trained in the master's level in overseas universities and about fifty persons who had already completed the basic two-year diploma course. Recognized in Ethiopia and throughout Africa as a centre of excellence in the school led the way towards upgrading social work practice in Ethiopia.

#### **The Closure of the School of Social Work**

The School of Social Work was closed when the Derg military regime came to power in 1974. The military regime wanted the country to adopt the socialist system, and banned the social work profession as incompatible with this system. The predominant socialist thinking was that social problems did not exist in a socialist state; it was the purpose of government to meet all human needs. All reference to social work was discouraged on the grounds that "it was reformist and represented a bourgeois machination to keep the working classes in a perpetual state of dependence". In addition, the school and its curriculum were designed in the western style. The School of Social Work was incorporated into the Department of Applied Sociology in the College of Social Sciences of Addis Ababa University and lost its social work essence.

#### **Reestablishment of Social Work Education**

The reestablishment of social work education was assisted by a linkage with the Jane Addams College of Social Work in at University of Illinois at Chicago, led by Dr. Alice Johnson Butterfield and a group of professors from around the world who volunteered to teach in the program. Butterfield's journey began when she was invited to Ethiopia in 2001. Through a series of consultations with Ethiopian professionals, Butterfield and other local counterparts saw that social work could play an important role in reducing poverty in Ethiopia. She and her colleagues sought funding to create a social work graduate program at Addis Ababa University. The project was entitled the Social Work Education in Ethiopia Partnership (SWEEP) and initially involved the Jane Addams College of Social Work at the University of Illinois at Chicago, Addis Ababa University, and several other international partners.

In 2003, Dr. Abye Tasse was appointed Dean of the School of Social Work at Addis Ababa University, and the school was reopened in 2004. In five years time, the school created BSW, MSW and PhD degree programs in Social Work and Social Development. Recently, other public and private institutions began offering social work education programs at the MSW as well as BSW and BA levels in regular, extension, summer and distance programs.

The elimination of social work education for 30 years led to a scarcity of social work professionals in the country. While there were a few professionals who received training outside the country during that time, social work can be seen as a new profession in Ethiopia. Part of the purpose

of this assessment is to determine what role this profession can play in mitigating the negative impact of the HIV epidemic in Ethiopia.

University of Gondar has also commenced Social work education at BSW level in year 2011/12 and currently it launched MSW program.

### **3-The Common Base of Social Work (Foundations of social work): the Knowledge (Theories in Social Work), Skills, and Values of Social Work, Understanding Social Work practice**

#### **The Common Base of Social Work: the Knowledge, Skills, and Values of Social Work**

Harriet Bartlett (1970) describes the central focus of social work as helping people cope with life situations and helping them balance the demands of their social environments. According to Bartlett, social workers have a particular orientation that reflects their concern for individuals in the context of their situations. To act on this orientation, social workers draw their attitudes toward people from a body of professional values and base their understanding of human behavior and environmental responses on a body of knowledge. The techniques and methods of practice derive from this value and knowledge base.

The foundation for generalist practice, thus, has a generic or common base of purpose, values, knowledge and skills shared by all social workers. This common base unifies the profession even though social work practitioners utilize a variety of methods, work in different settings, have diverse groups as clients and practice with clients at different system levels. The *values-knowledge-skills* complex of the profession describes the *why, the what and the how of social work*.

#### **A. The Knowledge Base of Social Work**

The knowledge base of social work includes the ways of thinking about and the means for understanding human behavior and the social environment. To this end, social work education includes both *a liberal arts perspective and a professional foundation*. Liberal art courses prepare students with broad knowledge from the humanities and sciences and equip students with tools for critical thinking and analysis and problem-solving skills and foster a more holistic understanding of our world. The professional foundation includes course work about the history and philosophy of social work, fields of social work practice, theoretical constructs and practice models, legislation and social policy, cultural influences, research and self-awareness.

The social work profession charges its members with the responsibility of promoting competent human functioning and fashioning a responsive and just society. Social workers strive to create order and enhance opportunities for people in an increasingly complex world. To achieve these goals, social workers require a knowledge base that can help them to clearly understand the way things are and a positive view of the way things could be.

The knowledge base of social work includes the ways of thinking about and means for understanding human behaviour and the social environment. Social work practitioners fine-tune their vision by incorporating in to it professional perspectives on human behaviour, cultural diversity, social environments and approaches to change. Social workers practice from a theoretical base that provides an understanding of how biological, social, psychological and cultural systems affect and are affected by human behaviour. Theoretical perspectives influence how social workers view clients and communicate with them, how social workers make assessments, design interventions, develop solutions, access resources and evaluate outcomes. The nature of social work as a profession of helping people to overcome the challenges in their lives; with a dual goal of improving societal institutions and assisting clients within their social and physical milieu; the multifaceted nature of social problems and practice settings; the diverse nature of client systems necessitates social workers to develop a broad knowledge base that guides and inform their practice. The nature of generalist social work- requiring extensive knowledge about the functioning of many types of human systems-necessitates a multidisciplinary preparation for practice.

Many social work perspectives derived from social science theories. Generalist social workers integrate information and ideas from many disciplines and theoretical perspectives to fit the unique characteristics of each client system and match the worker's perspectives and skills. Social workers commonly draw upon concepts from many theories and perspectives about human systems functioning

and combine them with theories and models of change to create practice frameworks to support their work.

The following are some of the disciplines that contribute to social work knowledge.

Disciplines	Research Domains
Anthropology	Culture and values, cross-cultural sensitivity, cultural and religious diversity
Biological Sciences	Health and wellness, illness, ecology, physical environment, genetics
Economics	Distribution of goods & services, capitalism, socialism, welfare economics
Psychology	Personality dynamics, gender roles, developmental issues, perception
Sociology	Structure & function of groups, organizations & society, small group behavior, social stratification, discrimination and "isms", deviance, role theory, demographics, social change theory, family dynamics

The diversity of client systems prompts social workers to draw from many different theoretical perspectives to inform their practice. Social workers apply a broad knowledge base of theoretical knowledge *"to explain why people behave as they do, to better understand how the environment affects behavior, to guide interventive behavior, and to predict what is likely to be the result of a particular social work intervention."* Social workers draw upon theoretical frameworks to organize their perception of clients' situations and to facilitate processes for change which include:

*A. Theories and perspectives about human systems*

Theories about human systems-including theories about communication, group process, social structures, power and diversity-inform practitioners. Derived primarily from the social and behavioral sciences, theories about human systems provide a cogent understanding of how biological, psychological, social, cultural, economic and political systems affect and are affected by human behavior and social structures. This knowledge base orients social worker to the complexity of human behavior, the interactional dynamics of multi-person systems and the nature and impact of conditions in the social environment. For example, general systems perspective offers principles about system functioning that apply to the behaviors of all human systems-individuals, families, social groups, communities and even complex bureaucracies. Combining the general systems perspective with concepts from the field of ecology forms the ecosystems view, the underlying frame work to generalist practice.

*B. Theories and models of change*

Theories about change in sociopolitical, organizational, community, group, family and individual systems influence social work processes-the ways that workers approach practice. Theories and models of change define the interaction between the social worker and the client system, determine which change strategies the social worker selects, and describe "who should do what" to create the cages desired. Various practice models, including the empowering approach generalist practice, strength perspective emerge from an understanding of the dynamics of change and its effect on the helping relationship.

**B. The Skill Base of Social Work**

In addition to professional values and knowledge, social work practice requires skills that range from applying theories to practice to utilizing technology and managing time effectively. Generalist social workers develop practice skills for working with clients at various system levels-individuals, families, formal groups, complex organizations and communities. Specific skills in working with individuals, group work, interdisciplinary teamwork, organizational development, community practice, and social reform enhance social workers' ability to work with a variety of clients.

*Relationship Skills*

Professional relationships between clients and social workers are the heart of social work practice. Social workers' ability to develop working relationships hinges on their interpersonal effectiveness and self awareness. Social workers must be skillful in communicating empathy, genuineness, trustworthiness, respect and support.

### *Communication Skills*

Good oral and written communication skills are absolutely essential. Interviewing skills are vital, since the basic processes of social work are exchanges of information. Social workers must be able to listen with understanding and respond with purpose. Competency in making oral presentations bolsters practitioners' ability to work with groups, organizations and communities. Being able to write clearly and concisely enhances social workers' effectiveness in keeping records, writing reports and applying for grants.

### **C. The Value Base of Social Work**

To achieve the objectives of the profession, social workers must be responsible partners in the change process. Their professional activities should be permeated with the values of the profession, founded on the purpose of social work, and guided by professional standards of ethical practice. Values guide the professional activities of social workers in their efforts with client systems. Social workers value client systems' strengths and competencies and work in partnership with clients to develop creative solutions. Social workers also value quality in their practice and continually examine their own practice effectiveness. Additionally, they take responsibility for ethical conduct and continual professional development. Ethics (moral duty) is the product of values. The concept of professional ethics, therefore, relates to the moral principles of practice. Social work values form the basis for social workers' beliefs about individuals and society, while ethics defines the framework for what should be done in specific situations.

### **Understanding Social Work Practice**

#### **7.1. Introduction to Social Work Practice**

Social work practice evolved from mid-eighteenth and nineteenth-century efforts to assist the poor. In those early years activities were carried out by volunteers, with few organizational supports and limited training if any. Today, the profession has a well-established knowledge base, a clearly articulated value orientation and diverse practice methodologies and interventions, all of which are transmitted to the new practitioner through formal educational processes.

#### **7.1. 1. Meaning and Mission of Social Work Practice**

Social work practice is a set of activities, roles and discourses. Social practice is the action to enhance and heal the social fabric. It is the "doing" of social work. It is the actual carrying out of specific actions and efforts to help achieve professionally sanctioned goals. The term includes an enormous variety of activities ranging from counselling individuals to helping make communities better places to live. The professional practice of social workers consists of the professional application of social work values, principles and techniques to one or more of the following ends: helping people obtain tangible services, providing counselling and psychotherapy for individuals, families and groups, helping communities or groups provide or improve social and health services and participating in legislative processes. In fact, the practice of social work stems directly from the mission of the profession. Social workers seek to enhance social function, promote social justice and help people to obtain resources. The practice of social work is intended to achieve the profession's purpose of helping clients. The main purpose of social work practice is to improve and enhance human wellbeing and social functioning. Ultimately, social work practice is what draws most students to the field as they imagine themselves helping others cope with their social and emotional problems.

#### **7. 1. 2. Concepts Essential to Social Work Practice**

Social work practice is both an art and science. The art of social work involves the sensitive coordination of complex activities to help clients. The science entails selecting, merging and understanding potentially voluminous amounts of information and applying the conclusions to a specific case situation. While many are successful in learning the science of the profession, the art is difficult to acquire. The interplay of art and science means that effective social work practice grows from the situation between knowledge, skills and values and ethics. Social work practice requires unique skills, either specialized or generalist in nature, that are derived from specific knowledge areas and guided by a clear, fundamental set of values and ethics.

Social work practice occurs within a context that includes the profession's ethical standards, society's expectations and laws and regulations. It requires knowledge about the behaviour and

development of individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. Social work practice also requires the ability to use a wide variety of skills including interviewing, problem solving, relationship formation and advocacy among many others.

#### *Knowledge Base*

The practice of social work is based on a specific body of scientifically tested knowledge. Practice evolves from the knowledge base as social work skills first developed in the academic curriculum later mature through field experiences and continuing education. Without the appropriate knowledge base and awareness of the theoretical constructs that undergird professional practice, skills would be nothing more than a series of unrelated actions that cannot address total person-in-situation who is at the heart of professional social work practice. Conversely, knowledge evolves from current practice through practice-based research and evaluation of social work interventions.

To create a consistent and comprehensive knowledge base of professional practice all social work educational programs require mastery of foundation content in nine areas: human behaviour and the social environment, social welfare policy and services, social policy, field practicum, research, social work practice, diversity, social work values and ethics, populations at risk and promotion of social and economic justice.

Knowledge needs to be directed toward three areas for the development of integrated, competency-based social work practice:

- *Knowledge that informs the social worker about the client:* psychology, sociology, social problems, social policy and antidiscrimination
- *Knowledge that helps the social worker plan appropriate intervention:* social work practice theory and models of intervention, methods of social work intervention and processes involved in social work intervention
- *Knowledge that clarifies the worker's understanding of the legal, policy, procedural and organizational context in which his practice occurs:* federal, state and local public legislation, social welfare policy and procedures and organizational contexts.

#### *Skills*

That we speak of “doing” social work implies that a social worker has a set of specific skills that they use in practice. These skills, which are inseparable from the helping process, include the ability to perform critical tasks in working with clients: basic communication, exploration, assessment and planning, implementation, goal attainment, termination and evaluation of the services rendered.

Skill building and acquisition are the bridge between values and knowledge and all subsequent social service activities. Unless knowledge and values underlie skills the practice of social work is undefined and vague. Social workers must have basic competencies in the following skill areas:

- *Cognitive skills*, including analytic skills and the capacity to evaluate and understand research
- *Administrative skills*, including record keeping and report writing
- *Interpersonal skills*, including verbal and non-verbal skills, understanding self awareness, use of authority, working with diversity, working in partnership and the ability to make and sustain positive working relationships.
- *Decision-making skills*, including authority and responsibility
- Use and management of resources

#### *Values and Ethics*

Values and ethics are the third critical component of social work practice. All professionals embrace specific values. Although social work values are spelled out in a number of documents, the primary reference for the profession's value base is the NASW code of ethics. This document can be called an “ought to” guide: it specifies how social workers ought to conduct themselves and their helping activities in the professional setting. The code establishes a set of beliefs that define ethical social work practice and thus acts as a unifying force among all social workers. The way we work with and on behalf of others, how we view social issues and the remedies we consider for individual, group or community ills are all firmly rooted in our value base.

As professionals, social workers must pursue the art of helping within a context shaped by values and ethics. Practice that is not guided by values or ethics has no meaning because such practice will fail to recognize the unique circumstances of our clients, their individual needs and appropriate change strategies. Unless we operate within an ethical framework our clients might as well be telling their problems to be a computer.

### **7. 1. 3. Generalist and Specialist Social Work Practice**

The practice of social work is generally conducted in one of two major frameworks: the generalist and the specialist. That the profession has both members who can work with a wide range of clients and members who can focus more sharply on particular groups of clients is our greatest strength. This is the reason we find social workers in so many different types of social agencies and organizational settings.

#### *Generalist Practice*

Landon (1995) has asserted that regardless of how hard the profession has tried, there still is no completely agreed upon definition of generalist practice—although, he did believe consensus existed on key elements of the definition. *First*, most professional social workers agree that generalist social work practice is primarily reserved for BSW social workers, although a few graduate programs now offer a specialization reflective of additional course work in the area of advanced generalist practice. *Second*, generalist social workers are prepared for entry-level social work practice. *Third*, in generalist practice social workers most often apply some type of “systems approach” to professional practice and subsequent intervention. Last, generalist practice utilizes a problem solving or planned change process to intervene with all size systems, including individuals, groups, organizations and communities.

According to the social work dictionary, a social work generalist is a practitioner whose knowledge and skill encompasses a broad spectrum and who assesses problems and their solutions comprehensively.

The broad-based generalist approach to social work practice integrates the client’s needs with those of the environment. In accepting the importance of the person-in-situation social workers are leaders in understanding and interpreting in interaction between behavioural, psychological and social factors in the client’s condition with environmental factors that the client faces daily.

#### *Specialist Practice*

The specialist social worker provides a more focused, higher level of intervention. A specialist always possesses an MSW degree and is prepared for advanced social work practice. According to the social work dictionary, a specialization is a profession’s focus of knowledge and skill on a specific type of problem, target population or objective. Social work specializations have developed in a number of ways over the years. One comprehensive scheme categorizes the various social work specializations into eight different areas:

#### *Models:*

- Methods: casework, group work, community organization
- Fields of practice: school, health care, occupational social work
- Population groups: children, adolescents and elderly people
- Problem areas: mental health, alcohol and drug abuse, corrections, mental retardation

#### *Specific Factors:*

- Geographic areas: urban, rural, neighbourhoods
- Sizes of target: individual, family, group, organization and community
- Specific treatment modalities: behaviour modification, ego psychology, gestalt therapy, cognitive therapy
- Advanced generalist

Social work is one of the most diverse fields of practice imaginable. specialist social workers are found in numerous settings: public and private agencies, public and private hospitals, clinics, school extended care facilities, private practice, private business police departments, courts and countless other work places, too numerous to enumerate.

## 7. 2. Fields of Social Work Practice

This section identifies some of the features of the primary fields of social work practice to familiarize the beginning worker with the range of places where a social worker might be employed. For the person considering *a career in social work*, it is important to have an understanding of the many different fields of practice open to the social worker. It is evident that the attention social workers give to helping people and their environments interact more favorably makes an important contribution to resolving social problems or enhancing social functioning in many areas.

*Social work is indeed a profession of many faces.* The variation in the type of human problems and social change activities in which social workers are involved is extensive. *Social work is also unique among the helping professions because of its dual focus on person and the environment.* Social workers help people deal with both their own behaviors and those of the world around them—a unique contribution among the helping professions. They help individuals relate more effectively to their families; families are helped to deal with social organizations such as schools, hospitals, and social agencies; organizations are helped to relate more effectively with communities and the cycle is completed as communities are helped to be more responsive to the needs of individuals. Hence, social workers need to acquire the knowledge and skill to practice with any of these fields.

As the profession with the primary responsibility for *helping people in need gain access to the services in a community*, social workers have a special responsibility to be knowledgeable about the full array of social programs. While detailed knowledge of each social program may not be possible, social workers should be at least familiar with the programs in all practice fields in order to successfully perform their vital role of linking clients with appropriate sources of help. *The human services system* is indeed complex, and the layperson cannot be expected to negotiate that system alone. The social worker, then, must not only know what services are available, but must also know how to interpret them to their clients and help these clients gain access to the resources they need.

The growing complexities of the society have made man more vulnerable and helpless and given rise to various types of social problems. Social Work implies bringing of various resources in helping people with such problems and alleviates their suffering. Social workers try to lessen 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.

Social work was once the domain of philanthropists, and done voluntarily. However today, with changing social values and norms, the problems are more complex and effect larger number of people especially in the urban areas and tackling such problems requires people not with just good heart but also with special skills. As a matter of fact it has become quite a sought after career offering reasonable financial returns.

*Field of social work practice* is a phrase used to describe a group of practice settings that deal with similar client problems. Social workers confront problems such as child abuse and neglect, homelessness, poverty, health care needs, neighbourhood decline, community apathy, drug abuse, and domestic violence. Generalists work with community organization, neighbourhood groups, families and individuals who are elderly, delinquent, unemployed or chronically mentally ill or who have disabilities. Fields of practice organize the types of services social workers provide. Services are grouped within numerous fields of practice as they relate to addressing specific social problems, meeting the needs of client population groups (elderly, families, poor, people living with disabilities, juveniles, homeless, chemically dependent) or reflecting particular settings.

The field of social work encompasses a variety of subjects like sociology, psychology, education, criminology, industrial relations and personnel management and medical sciences and career opportunities would depend on an individual's area of specialisation. There are job openings both in the government as well as non-governmental sectors. Openings in the governmental sector are mainly in the community development projects pertaining to health, rural development and tribal welfare etc. Work in the non-governmental sector i.e. in NGOs' is more varied and can be specific to either urban or rural area. Postgraduates in Social Work (MSW) also have job opportunities in the industrial and corporate sector.

The common fields of practice include the following but not limited to: family and child welfare services, community/neighborhood development, mental health, poverty and welfare, social work in corrections/ criminal justice system, aging or gerontological services, alcohol and substance abuse, disabilities, occupational social work, education or school social work, health and rehabilitation services, housing, income maintenance, information and referral.

Each field may include a number of different agencies or other organized ways of providing services. For example, in any community, the social agencies concerned with crime and delinquency might include a juvenile court, a community corrections agency, a probation office for adult offenders, and/or a correctional facility where offenders are incarcerated. All fields work with people who have come to the attention of the legal system and would be considered part of the practice field of corrections.

One factor that makes social work different from many other professions is the opportunity to help people deal with a wide range of human problems without needing to obtain specialized professional credentials for each area of practice. During his or her lifetime, for example, one social worker might organize and lead self-help groups in a hospital, deal with cases of abuse and neglect, develop release plans for persons in correctional facility, arrange for foster homes and adoptions for children, supervise new social workers, serve as executive director of a human service agency. Regardless of the type of work performed, the social worker always has the same fundamental purpose—namely, to draw on basic knowledge, values, and skills in order to help achieve desired change to improve the quality of life for the persons involved.

Although there are similarities in the tasks performed by social workers regardless of the nature of the services provided, there are also unique aspects of their practice with each population group. For example, services to children and youth differ from services to the elderly, or the needs of a disabled adult differ from those of a person about to be released from a correctional facility. Each of these fields of practice typically uses at least some specialized language, emphasizes specific helping approaches and techniques, or may be affected by different laws or social programs. Therefore, what a social worker does and needs to know will vary to some extent from field to field.

**Family Services:** social workers provide support for families to enhance family functioning. Examples of services include counseling, family therapy and family life education.

**Child Protection Services:** these services address issues of child abuse and neglect. Services include child protection services, child abuse investigation, prevention and family preservation and reunification services.

**Health Care:** in the health care field, practitioners work in medical settings such as hospitals, nursing homes, public health agencies, and hospice programs. They also provide rehabilitation counseling. Examples include hospital social work, public health work, maternal health work, and hospice care.

**Occupational Social Work:** usually under the auspices of an employee assistance program, occupational social workers provide counseling, referral and educational services for employees and their families. Issues may be work related such as job stress, or personal such as family crises or addictions.

**Gerontological Social Work:** gerontological social workers offer services to older adults and their caregivers. Comprehensive and specialized services for the elderly typically fall within the auspices of service agencies for older adults. However, services for older adults also may be a component of a multifaceted community agency.

**School Social Work:** social workers in schools are part of an interdisciplinary team that often includes guidance counselors, school psychologists and teachers. School social work services are available to school-age children and their families to resolve school-related educational and behavioral problems.

**Criminal Justice:** social workers have a presence in both juvenile and adult corrections. They monitor clients on probation or parole, provide counseling in prisons and juvenile detention facilities and work in victim restitution programs.

**Information and Referral:** information and referral specialists play a key role in offering service delivery information, making referrals to community resources and initiating community outreach programs. Many agencies include information and referral component in their spectrum of services.

**Community organizing:** social workers employed by community-action programs engage in community and neighborhood development, social planning and direct-action organizing. Organizers mobilize community members or constituent populations in reform activities.

**Mental Health:** case management, therapy, drug and alcohol treatment and mental health advocacy are a few of the activities of social workers employed in mental health settings. Mental health settings include, for example, community mental health centers, state hospitals, day treatment programs and residential facilities for people with mental disorders.

### **7.3. Settings of Social Work Practice**

Society's commitment to the welfare of its members is played out through an extensive array of *social programs* that are delivered by several different helping professions- including social work. For people to gain access to these programs and professionals there must be some form of *organizational structure* that serves as a vehicle for delivering human services. Usually that is a formal organization that operates under the auspices of a *federal, state or local government* or it is a private human services agency that is structured as either a *nonprofit (voluntary)* or *for-profit (business)* agency. Increasingly these services are also offered by social workers who are private practitioners, that is, social workers who contract directly with their clients for services in the same manner as the private physician or attorney contracts with his or her clients. These differing practice settings influence the nature of the problems a social worker address, the clients served, the salary required, and many other factors that affect one's work activity and job satisfaction.

Throughout its history, social work has been an agency-based profession. Like teaching, nursing, and the clergy, social work practice emerged primarily within organizations and today, as in the past, most social workers are employed in some form of human service organization. There are three major settings of social work where social workers can be employed: *the public or government, voluntary and business sector settings.*

When social programs are created, a decision must be made about how the program will be delivered. When programs are provided by *human service organizations*, the agencies establish the necessary policies and supply the administrative structure to make the program available to recipients. Clients then contract with that agency to provide the needed service and the agency employs staff to deliver the program. The organization is responsible for determining who is eligible for service and how that service will be performed, for screening and selecting its staff, assigning the work to various staff members, monitoring the quality of the work and securing funds to pay the costs of providing the service.

When the service is delivered by a social worker in private practice, the client contracts directly with the social worker or the private practice group with which the worker is associated. The client then pays directly for the service or draws on insurance, Medicare or other funds to pay for the service. As opposed to agency-based practice, both the client and the practitioner have considerable latitude in selecting intervention approaches and determining how the helping process will proceed.

The type of practice setting, whether agency or private practice, partially determines who will be clients, how clients will be protected against incompetent practice, and the degree of flexibility the worker has in providing services to clients. Thus, it is useful to examine the several types of organizational structures that serve as the settings for social work practice.

#### ***Government Sector Setting***

Government organizations are established and funded by the general public with the intent to provide services that preserve and protect the well-being of all people in the community. These agencies reflect city, country, state and federal governmental efforts to respond to human needs and are limited by the provisions of the laws under which they were established.

#### ***Voluntary Sector Setting***

Out of the history of providing assistance for persons needing help, a number of mutual aid organizations have been created to facilitate members of a group providing services for other members of that group. Churches, labor unions, and civic clubs are examples of this type of voluntary organization.

### ***Business Sector Setting***

This category of practice includes both private and employment in large organizations that exist to earn a profit for their owners. The term private practice is used to indicate a practice situation where a contract for the provision of service is made directly between the client and the worker.

Social workers have a central role to play in all three sectors of the economy-government, voluntary and business. The ability of these professionals to perform their function depends at least partially on their ability to effectively work within a human services organization or manage a private practice. Understanding several issues typically experienced in each of these settings can help future social workers anticipate difficulties they may face and be prepared to deal with them head on.

### **4- Generalist Approach to Social Work Practice, Levels and Methods of Social Work Practice: Social Casework, Social Work Practice with Groups and Communities**

#### **Generalist Social Work Practice**

Typically at the foundation or entry level of the profession, social workers today are generalist practitioners. Generalists work directly with client systems that present diverse problems and needs, practice in a wide range of social service systems/setting and apply variety of models and methods. Some may argue that the effectiveness of the specialized methods- case work, group work, community organization is lost in generic orientation. However, proponents of the generalist approach believe that the unified perspective fosters breadth in potential intervention.

What is new in *Generalist Approach*?

- ✦ It fulfills the requirement for alterable approach to social work practice demanded by the increasing complexity and interrelatedness of human problems.
- ✦ It practices perspective from which the social worker views the practice situation i.e. person environment and to continually look for ways to cuter value vine in more than one client system.
- ✦ Rather than attempting to make the client situation fit the methodological orientation of the social worker, the situation is viewed as determinant factor of the practice approach to be used. Thus, the social worker needs to have broad knowledge and skill base to serve diversified clients.
- ✦ Requires a worker to be theoretically and methodologically open when approaching practice situation.
- ✦ It is informed by socio- behavioral and eco-system knowledge and incorporates ideologies that include democracy, humanism and empowerments.
- ✦ It recognizes that there is a generic foundation for all social work, whether generalist or specialist, that includes such factors as knowledge about the social work profession, social work values, the purpose of social work, ethnic/diversity sensitivity, basic communication skills, understanding of human relationships and others.
- ✦ The worker should be able to intervene at different clients system using different intervention methods. Therefore, they should have minimum knowledge base to do and the workers must draw on variety of skills and methods in sensing clients.
- ✦ Clients with many problems require intervention with more than one system and in the process of problem solving the generalist may play several roles simultaneously or sequentially depending up on the needs of the clients.

The generalist social work practice rests upon four major *premises*.

1. Human behavior is invariably connected to the social and physical environment.
2. Based on these linkages among persons and environments, opportunities for enhancing the functioning of any human system include:
  - ✓ Changing the system itself
  - ✓ Modifies its interactions with the environment
  - ✓ Altering other system within its environment
3. Social worker with any level of human system from individuals to society uses similar social work processes.
4. General practitioners have responsibilities beyond direct practice to work toward just social policies as well as to conduct and apply research.

The generalist social workers possess an integrated view of the interaction between people and the resources within networks of relationships that make up the human environment. This approach incorporates the needs of individuals, groups, organizations, and communities, as well as issues pertaining to service delivery and social policies. As such generalist practice offers a broad range of potential interventions.

Generalist social work provides an *integrated, multifaceted and multileveled* approach for meeting the purposes of social work. Generalist practitioners acknowledge the interplay of personal and collective issues, promoting them to work with a variety of human systems-societies, communities, neighbourhoods, complex organizations, formal groups, families and individuals-to create changes which maximize human system functioning. This means that generalist social workers *work with client systems at all levels, connect clients to available resources, intervene with organizations to enhance the responsiveness of resource systems, advocate just social policies to ensure the equitable distribution of resources and research all aspects of social work practice.*

Generalist social work fosters a *comprehensive, "wide-angle lens"* view of the problem. Generalist social workers define client system's difficulties in the context of person-environment transactions and find solutions within the interactions between people and their environments. In generalist social work, *the nature of presenting situations, the particular systems involved, and the potential solutions* shape interventions rather than a social workers' adherence to a particular method.

#### ***Basic Practice Assumption in Generalist Social Work Practice***

Brown (1982) presents a cogent rationale for the generalist approach. Social workers and clients assess situations in the context in which the social problem occurs, and they consider the impact the problem has on various human systems. Solving problems effectively requires a full range of practice strategies. The basic assumptions underlying *situation oriented* generalist approach to practice rather than *method oriented* approach includes:

1. *People's problems in social functioning* have their roots and their solutions at all levels of society simultaneously. Therefore, social work/ intervention must also reflect this total view in an ongoing systemic way.
2. The area of observation (assessment) will dictate the area of work for the generalist practitioner.
3. A problem-solving (solution-seeking) orientation directs the practitioners to all three methods as potential resource for intervention, planning and implementation.
4. Assessment in generalist social work should consist of a broad base formation that exceeds the scope of a single method.
5. The practice methods of casework, group work and community organization can be used singly, serially or in combination in a direct-service approach. This approach to practice usually begins with individuals, families, small groups and must extend through all levels of intervention contingent upon the particular problems with social functioning.
6. Generalist practitioners must support both the changes and maintenance functions of the organizational structure where they work.

#### **Competencies**

Competencies of generalist social workers include a set of skills, from a strengths perspective, oriented toward major units in our society. These competencies, adapted from family reservation practice (Ronnau & Sallee, 1992), reflect generalist values and principles. A competent generalist social worker abides by the following tenets:

1. Frames problems in solvable, acceptable ways and employs techniques and skills that build on each client system's unique strengths and motivates systems to attain self-sufficiency.
2. Engages individuals, groups, families, agencies, and other community services in genuine partnership and teaches skills necessary to attain the client system's goals.
3. Understands, respects, and practices within the client system's cultural, experiential, and historical context as the framework for social work practice.
4. Is knowledgeable, respectful, sensitive, and responsive to issues of human diversity.

5. Integrates and applies the values and techniques of social work service and practice, based on a commitment to the core belief in the importance of the client system.
6. Joins in partnership with the client system to facilitate its empowerment by utilizing the generalist social work change process and its values to enable the client system to meet its goals.

**Levels and Methods of Social Work Practice**

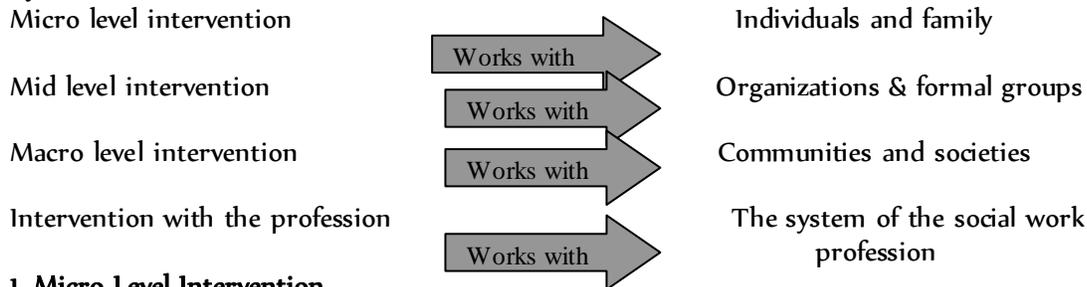
**3.1. Levels of Social Work Practice**

The generalist approach moves beyond the confines of individually focused practice to the expansive sphere of intervention at multiple system levels. According to Brown (1982), the multilevel nature of generalist social work practice consists of:

Assisting individuals, families, small groups, and larger social systems to work on change which promotes the best possible relationship between people and their environment. Generalist practice is addressed to the solution and/or prevention of problems at all levels of intervention: intrapersonal, family, interpersonal, organizational, community, institutional and societal.

The view of generalist social work is like the view through *a wide-angle lens of a camera*. It takes in the whole even when focusing on an individual part. Workers assess people in the back drop of their settings and interventions unfold with an eye to outcomes at all system levels. Visualize potential clients and agents for change on a continuum ranging from micro-to mid- to macro level interventions, small systems to large systems, including the system of the social work profession itself. Generalist social workers view problems in context, combine practice techniques to fit the situation, and implement skills to intervene at multiple system levels.

**System Levels for Social Work Intervention**



**1. Micro Level Intervention**

Micro level intervention involves on work with people individually, in families or in small groups to foster changes within personal functioning, in social relationships and in the ways people interact with social and institutional resources. Individuals often seek social work services because they experience in personal adjustment, interpersonal relationships, or environmental stresses. Changes at this level focus on creating changes in an individual or family social functioning. To work with micro level clients, social workers need to know about individual, interpersonal, family, and group dynamics as well as human development, social psychology. Social workers draw on the knowledge and skill of clinical practice, including strategies such as *crisis intervention, family therapy, linkage and referral and the use of group process*.

*Table 1: Levels of generalist social work practice: practice area, objective and strategy*

Levels of intervention	Practice area	Objective/goal	Strategy/skill
Micro	Work with individuals, families or small groups	To facilitate changes within personal functioning, social relationships and the ways people interact with social and institutional resources	Clinical practice like crisis intervention, family therapy, linkage and referral, group process.
Mid	Work with formal groups and complex organizations	Creating changes in formal groups and organizations including their structure, function and role	Understanding of group process and skills in facilitating decision making and proficiency in organizational planning
Macro	Work with neighborhood, communities and societies	Facilitate and achieve social change	Neighborhood organizing Community planning, public education, social action, social policy formulation and community development
Social Work Profession	Define professional relationship with social work and interdisciplinary colleagues, reorient priorities within the profession and reorganize the system of service delivery	Address issues within the system of social work profession	Standard setting and accountability call

**2. Mid Level Intervention**

The mid level social work intervention represents interactions with formal groups and complex organizations. Practice with formal groups includes work with teams, work groups, task groups, self-help groups and task-oriented community service clubs. Examples of complex organizations include social service agencies, health care organizations, educational systems and correctional facilities.

With mid level intervention, the focus of change is within organizations and formal groups themselves including their structure, function, role, goal, patterns of decision-making, and styles of interaction. In mid level intervention, the client system is literally the group or organization. Working at the midlevel necessitates understanding the dynamics of formal groups and organizational structures. Effective midlevel work requires skills in facilitating decision making, conflict negotiation and proficiency in organizational planning.

**3. Macro Level Intervention**

Macro level intervention includes working with neighbourhoods, communities, and societies to achieve social change in order to promote social justice. At this level of intervention, the client system is the community or society. Examples of macro level clients include neighbourhoods, cities, rural areas, communities, and local and national governments. The primary target of change is the community or society itself; however, because of the transactional nature of change, changes at the macro level also affect changes at all other system levels.

Generalist practitioners at the macro level work to achieve social change through neighbourhood organizing, community planning, locality development, legislative action, social action and policy formulation. Macro level practice requires knowledge of community standards and values; and skills in mobilizing the community are needed for problem solving initiatives with regard to interventions at societal level. Social work is “society’s conscience in action.” Social workers strive to eliminate social problems that affect the social functioning of citizens, erode the quality of life, or weaken the structure of society.

An international perspective is emerging in social work with the growing recognition that problems transcend societal boundaries. Shared concerns about human rights, health, world poverty, social and economic development, the environment and population expansion require international cooperation through international federations in both industrialized and developing countries. To expand their knowledge base for a world view approach, social workers need information about international health and service organizations, world affairs, politics, and cultural diversity or perhaps even more fundamentally, world geography.

#### **4. The Social Work Profession**

Finally, generalist practitioners address issues within the system of social work profession itself. These activities define professional relationships with social work and interdisciplinary colleagues, reorient priorities within the social work profession, or reorganize the system of service delivery. Standard setting and accountability call for social workers to be actively involved in the system of social work profession.

#### **3.2. Methods of Social Work Practice**

Social work involves ameliorating social problems that may prevent/limit people's social functioning. When problems become stressful and self-help efforts fail to produce desired solutions, professional assistance may be needed. Social workers are agents of change who attempt to improve the conditions that adversely affect the *functioning of clients or client systems*. Change efforts may be geared toward assisting individuals, families, groups, organizations or communities or all, and entail appropriate *methods of intervention* to achieve solutions to problems. Practice methods incorporate social work values, principles and techniques in *helping people obtain resources, conducting counseling and psycho therapy with individuals or groups, helping communities or organizations provide or improve social and health services and participating in relevant legislative processes that affect the quality of life for all citizens*.

#### **A. Case Work (Social Work Practice with Individuals)**

The first method which appeared owing to the effort of Marry Richmond (1917) is *case work*. It is the oldest social work practice. It is exhaustively discussed in her book entitled as "*Social Diagnosis*", and it is better in dealing with different problems which are related with individuals and families. At that time, the profession was exclusively focusing on the aforementioned client systems. When social worker's effort is aimed at working directly with individuals or families, the process is called *case work (direct practice)*. This method is geared toward helping individuals and families identify solutions to personal or other problems related to difficulty with social functioning. The method emphasizes on the social interaction that contribute to adequate or inadequate social functioning.

Social case work is an art in which knowledge of the science of human relationships in relationship are used to mobilize capacities in the individual and resources in the community appropriate to better adjustment between the client and all or any part of his total environment.

A recent definition may also be quoted for further clarification: "Case work is a professional service offered to those who desire help with their personal and family problems. Its aim is to relieve stress and to help the client to achieve a better personal and social adjustment. It proceeds by the study of the individual in his social milieu, by the establishment of a co-operative relationship with him, and by the mobilizing of both his own resources and those of the community to work towards these goals.

The practice of case work is a humanistic attempt for helping people who have difficulty in coping with the problems of daily living. It is one of the direct methods of social work which uses the case-by approach of dealing with individual or families as regards their problems of social functioning. Social case work is primarily related with the psycho-social problems. It consists of the study of mental, emotional social case factors. According to Prof. Gordan Hamilton, "a social case is a living event within which there are always economic, physical, mental, emotional and social factors in varying proportion.

According to Marry Richmond, "Social case work may be defined as the art of doing different things for and with different people by co-operation with them to achieve at one and the same time their own and their society's betterment. Arther Find and others- "social Case work is method by which one individual offers help to another in meeting some of the problems that arise of the fact that our

world is organized as it is. According to Porter R. Lee, social case work is the method of effecting the understanding of the needs, resources and reactions of individuals.

The components of social case work are the person; the problem and the place.

The following are the principles of case work.

1. The principle of acceptance
2. The principle of communication
3. The principle of individualization
4. The principle of participation
5. The principle of confidentiality
6. The principle of self-awareness
7. The principle of growth and change
8. The principle of purposeful expression and feelings
9. The principle of controller emotional involvements
10. The principle of Self-determination

Among others, the following are considered in achieving a balanced social functioning such as; *the worker's state of mind; the importance of context; the impact of family and other social roles; essentials of interviewing process including objectivity, empathy and utilization of the client's strength; and the interaction of personality and the social environment.*

Direct practice often is considered to be *therapeutic* in nature. On the other hand, case work shifted the focal area of the profession from changing the social institution to changing the individual usually due to the triumph of psychoanalytic theory based on the Sigmund Freud's psychodynamic movement (in 1920s and 1930s). Practically this theory focuses on internal factors like; personal failure and maladjustment which constitute people's intra psychic dynamics rather than environmental influences. But, later partly due to the effort of some professionals the central interest becomes on "the capacity of individual to structure their social activities within a given environment" (i.e., emphasizing on the reciprocal relationship between 'men and their social environment'). And the method incorporates four processes in authenticating the approach: *insight in to the individual; insight in to the environment; direct action mind up on mind; and indirect action through the environment.*

### **B. Group Work (Social Work Practice with Groups)**

The second type of traditional practice method is *group work*, which aims to intervene with group based problems in a more advanced and effective style. It is a method that fosters personal development through the mechanism of group process. It uses small group interaction as a vehicle for social change. Group work stresses the value of self-development through structured interactions with other group members. This process encourages personal growth through active participation as a group member. It emphasizes the value of participation, democratic goal setting, freedom of expression, acceptance, and the development of positive attitudes through sharing. It has gained recognition in 1940s. In its' earlier stage, it focused on education, recreation and character building activities in solving group problems (mezzo level). Practically it helps to develop social competencies, especially those experiencing; powerlessness, alienation, and hopelessness. And Grace Coyle (1892-1962) is an early leader of social group work which prefers a creative group experiences in solving group problems. Thus, it is important in solving problems of households, families, neighbourhoods, clubs and other social groups.

Group work is a method of social work practice by which individuals are served within and through small face to face groups, in order to solve their problems and bring about desired changes at the individual, groups and community level. It recognizes the strength of social forces that are generated within small group and seeks to mobilize them for change in the client. Social Group Work is a method of social work which helps individuals to enhance their social functioning through purposeful group experiences and to cope more effectively with their personal, group or community problems (Konapka -1963). According to Trecker "Social group work is a method through which individuals in groups in social agency settings are helped by worker who guide their interaction in program activities so that they may relate themselves to others and exercise group opportunities in accordance with their needs and capacities.

***Characteristics of Group Work***

1. Group work is practiced with the groups
2. Based on Humanitarian philosophy
3. To know the stays of an individual with his group
4. To obtain maximum information about the group
5. To obtain integration between individual and group
6. To know various factor involved in group life
7. To know the available Resources for the Group
8. To motivate the group for spontaneous progress
9. The group work aims at to develop the4 leadership
10. Aims for recognition of self-determination

***Goal (Purpose) of Group work:***

- ☉ To teach the individual to live & work together and participate in the group activities for their intellectual emotion& physical growth
- ☉ To live a good life within the group and family. The individual is also taught to work together with other people & participate in different activities.
- ☉ To develop individual personality& behavior by using different group work process

***Functions of group work***

The main functions of group work are as follows

Group work focuses on the individuals in the group and group itself is a major tool for furthering socially desirable objectives. The group work mainly sees the situations and the needs of all the individuals and more than the groups tries to solve the problems of the individuals. For every individual, the group is the main source of strength and renders everybody a helping hand. The group fulfils the social series and needs of each individual in the group.

Group work is carried on with voluntary group in the setting of social agency in educational, recreational or religious fields. The group work is day by day increasing many areas of the society. This kind of group work is done by so many groups voluntarily. When these groups take care of these groups works then the setting of the social agencies in many fields like educational, recreational or religious become more and more strong and from these agencies the poor and the needy are helped in different forms to meet their livelihood.

It is a helping process with dual purpose of individual and groups growth. The function of the group work is always for the betterment of the individual as well as for the growth of the entire groups. The group work plays a vital role for the development and for the growth of everybody in the group by benefiting one way or the other.

In every group work, there is a group leader who always guides and enables the members of the groups. The group worker plays a great role in helping and forming an effective group. The group worker is a main person in a group who by his better knowledge about the group tries to make the group a better one. He tries to lead and guide the whole group in a better way so that members are happy by the good guidance of the group work.

Social group work is a form a social work in which the principles of one-on-one casework and community organizing are combined. Through a group-centered process, facilitators (or workers) work to meet the social dilemmas faced by the group, as well as tend to the psychological issues surrounding the conflict. Oftentimes, the facilitators either work or live inside the community and, thereby, experience the conditions which prompt the problematic issue. Facilitators typically work as a network within the group process, and share the leadership and support roles.

The treatment purpose within social group work relies on mutual inclusion and mutual respect as members share, problem-solve and gain strength from the sense that no one has to tackle the problem alone. As members share and assist one another with problems, they learn how to communicate about difficult issues while being supportive for those going through the same challenges.

### **Social work practice with families**

Social work practice with families involves the application of social work methods and techniques to help improve the social functioning of families. The goal is to instill hope in the family, provide realistic possibilities, and build positive experiences for family members and to look forward. Employs family system perspective

### **Community Work /Organization**

Community practice is the application of practice skills to alter the behavioral patterns of community groups, organizations, and institutions or people's relationships and interactions with these entities. Community practice as macro practice includes the skills associated with *community organization* and development, *social planning* and *social action*, and social administration. *Community organization* is the practice of helping a community or part of a community, such as a neighborhood or a group of people with a common interest, to be a more effective, efficient, and supportive social environment for nurturing people and their social relationships.

The nature and characteristics of different social problems demands the development of various relevant social programs and the involvement of more than one social agency. This in turn, paves a way for the emergence of a third distinct practice method-*community organization*- that focuses on the situational context of behavioral change. This method tries to create change in a larger groups and organizational units. The institutional/organizational changes in turn affect personal well being. E.g. Early community organization efforts addressed community problems stemming from World War II, such as, the need for a network services for military families and day care services for children whose mothers were member of the work force. On the other hand, Eduard Lindeman (1885-1953) which was the famous leader of community organization has developed an *integrated, holistic, interdisciplinary perspective on human behavior and social problems*. As per to some practitioners, community organization involves the following activities like: *community organization; organizational development; and social reform*.

Apart from this, community problem solving initiative involves; community leaders, corporation boards, unions, foundations, ethnic and religious organizations, professionals, clients and civic groups. Consequently, its main aim is to oversee the pattern of coordination and to evaluate and promote the effectiveness of different service delivery systems that are employed within the client system. More importantly, the method was primarily concerned with the distribution of financial resources and building linkages among available services.

Community organizing is a process where people who live in proximity to each other come together into an organization that acts in their shared self-interest. A core goal of community organizing is to generate *durable* power for an organization representing the community, allowing it to influence key decision-makers on a range of issues over time. In the ideal, for example, this can get community organizing groups a place at the table *before* important decisions are made. Community organizers work with and develop new local leaders, facilitating coalitions and assisting in the development of campaigns.

### ***Common aspects of community organizing groups***

Organized community groups attempt to influence government, corporations and institutions, seek to increase direct representation within decision-making bodies, and foster social reform more generally. Where negotiations fail, these organizations seek to inform others outside of the organization of the issues being addressed and expose or pressure the decision-makers through a variety of means, including picketing, boycotting, sit-ins, petitioning, and electoral politics. Organizing groups often seek out issues they know will generate controversy and conflict. This allows them to draw in and educate participants, build commitment, and establish a reputation for winning. Thus, community organizing is usually focused on more than just resolving specific issues. In fact, specific issues are often vehicles for other organizational goals as much as they are ends in themselves.

Community organizers generally seek to build groups that are democratic in governance, open and accessible to community members, and concerned with the general health of the community rather than a specific interest group. Organizing seeks to broadly empower community members, with the end goal of distributing power more equally throughout the community.

### **Functions of community organization**

In general, community organization includes many activities dealing with the different aspects of community life, evaluation of community needs, discovery of resources, coordination between various programs implementation of various programs and their evaluation. But in the contest of rural communities in country, certain other activities are also important. Chief among them are as follows:

- i. To bring a change in the traditional outlook of the people.
- ii. To improve the economic condition of the village
- iii. Development of village industries.
- iv. Expansion of education

### **Social work practice with organizations**

Social work practice with organization involves the application of social work methods and techniques to help improve the functioning of human service organizations. Holland defines organizations as “formalized groups of people who make coordinated use of resources and skills to accomplish given goals or purposes . . . [with a] focus on promoting and enhancing the well-being of the people they serve” (as quoted in Gibelman, 2003, p. 19). The majority of work carried out by social workers is done within a nonprofit or governmental organization. Therefore, it is important to understand the dynamics of organizations and how the skills and interests of staff, as well as clients, fit within the mission of the organization. Social workers need to know how organizations operate, interact, and how they can be influenced from both outside and inside.

### **3. The Integrated Generalist Model**

A professional desire to unify the three social work methods case work, group work and community organization precipitated the search for a common base of practice. In the decades of the 1978s and 1980s, the generalist approach to practice gained recognition and acceptance. As Balinsky stated, the complexity of human problems necessitates a broadly oriented practitioner with a versatile repertoire of methods and skills capable of interacting in any one of a number of systems. The generalist model provided that versatility and met the requirement for a flexible approach to social work practice demanded by the increasing complexity and interrelatedness of human problems. The contemporary generalist approach integrates the traditional intervention methodologies into a unified framework: one that was not bounded by methods but rather was shaped by situational or environmental parameters. It expands the concept of clients to include all social systems in the system in the environmental areas. Clients are communities, neighborhoods, corporations, groups or individuals.

The generalist approach to social work practice is orientated towards finding solutions to problems and challenges. Presenting issues, rather than a particular method direct generalist practice activities. This is not to say that generalists are jacks (or jills) of-all-trades and masters of none; rather, generalists are master of resolving problems. Social work interventions occur at the individuals, family, group, organizational community and society system levels often simultaneously. Solving problems effectively requires a full range of practice strategies. Therefore, generalists also intervene indirectly, or on behalf of clients, in legislative advocacy and policy formulation activities.

### **5-The Social Work Process; Roles of Social Workers**

#### **5.1. Social Work Process: the Problem Solving Approach**

In the context of social work practice, “process” refers to the succession of encounters and activities that take place during the course of a professional intervention with a client. And each of these encounters and activities are made up of steps and elements that both develop and contribute to a collaborative client-worker relationship. The problem-solving process is a two-way medium; both the client and the social worker must work together to find solutions to any given problem.

Developing an understanding and awareness of the social work process is therefore one of the prerequisites for social workers to become reflective practitioners. Reflection within the context of problem solving refers to the worker’s ability to work in a thoughtful and systematic way. When applying reflection, social workers need to be aware of and inform their clients about the reasons for their mutual involvement in particular activities—e.g., why are we doing this? What purpose does this step have? How will it help us solve this problem?—only then can they clarify and justify their methods and actions.

Interventions should be purposeful and suited to the overall plan or strategy applied throughout the process, i.e., if actions do not reflect the ongoing progress of the client-social worker relationship, they will be much harder to complete and abide. The social work process generally requires an awareness of all phases of any given intervention, so that the social worker and the client can prepare, carry out, and evaluate their agreed upon interventions. There should not be any surprises.

In addition to being aware of the social work process, social workers must be aware of themselves. The ability to *self-reflect* is required of all social workers. In order to be able to help a client reflect on his/her own actions, thoughts and beliefs-which they will have to do time and time again-social workers must be able to do the same.

#### *Understanding a Problem*

In social work, a problem is defined as “an event, condition or experience that stimulates a sense of disequilibrium and a corresponding motivation to regain a sense of equilibrium through thought or action or both thought and action”. Note that this definition does not imply any value judgment. From an ethical point of view, problems are considered as neither good nor bad. In social work, problems are not to be interpreted as representing something negative about an individual, group, family, organization, or community; that is, problems are not necessarily the result of crimes or sins. Rather, problems should be seen as inevitable outcomes that can happen to anyone; everyone encounters, grapples with, and resolves problems every day.

According to social work theory, as the human mind operates to respond to challenges, thinking begins. As people are confronted with problems, they work to figure out ways to resolve them. Problem solving involves *rationality* and *reflection*. The rational and reflective aspects of thinking help people to avoid both misleading conclusions about the nature of a problem as well as inappropriate ways to resolve it. Problems and problem solving are integral components of the process of being human.

Problems also can emerge from challenges people experience in their day-to-day lives. These challenges come from a combination of *motivation*, *capacity*, and *opportunity*. In the problem-solving approach, these terms are defined as:

- Motivation: An imbalance of hope and discomfort, in relation to an imagined solution to the problem-a goal.
- Capacity: The needed knowledge, social skills, rational skills, relationship with external reality, and interplay of current and past bio-psycho-social factors in development.
- Opportunity: Access to support systems, needed resources, and helping relationships.

From a problem-solving perspective, the accomplishment of a desired goal rests on the motivation, capacity, and opportunity of people to individually or collectively engage in a problem-solving process.

#### *Problem Solving Approach*

Problem solving is both a process and a methodology. It is a process in the sense that it involves time-consuming activities that focus on identifying appropriate intervention strategies. It is also a method because it provides situation-specific tools that help social workers and clients solve particular problems.

The problem-solving process is the foundation for social work practice. Compton *et al.* (2005) point out that: this process relies upon the collaborative nature of both clients and social workers and stresses the integration of all the phases applied throughout the process. The client-social worker collaboration and process phase integration require a high level of professional responsibility; social workers must accumulate sophisticated knowledge and critically use their intelligence to effectively contribute to the process. Equally important to the accumulated knowledge of the social worker is the fact that clients have their own knowledge and skills to be used in the process of problem solving.

The social worker must understand and accept that clients are able to (and should be encouraged to) contribute relevant information and strategy to their own problem-solving process. Based on this understanding, throughout the problem-solving process the client and the social worker should work together to reach consensus, to synthesize their knowledge and ideas through collaboration, and partnership, and transform their ideas into actions. In this client-worker partnership process, the social worker has a professional and moral obligation to share his or her expertise and analyze the client's situation with the client; a failure to do so will result in a violation of the principles of partnership.

It is very important that social workers obtain a comprehensive understanding of their clients. Compton *et al.* (2005) also note that often, problems and their corresponding solutions involve emotions, knowledge, perceptions, and thinking that interact in a complex way. Emotions can also obscure the nature of problems and then hinder possible solutions. For example, when people are overwhelmed by intense emotions, they cannot genuinely and fully participate in a collaborative partnership. So, social workers should first help clients to lower the intensity of their emotions (as well as validate their concerns) before directly proceeding with problem solving.

The social worker role in the problem-solving process involves the application of a specific set of skills, including:

- Having a solid understanding and knowledge of the complexity and the multiple layers of social problems;
- Knowing how to access available resource and human service organizations that are essential for addressing those problems;
- Acting with professional competence; and
- Developing a referral system that helps resolve problems and effectively meet the needs of clients.

These elements help the social worker develop a thoughtful and rational approach to problem solving. They also help the social worker to balance their primary responsibilities while ensuring the clients' active participation in decision-making and action plan development.

Problem solving, as a collaborative partnership between the client and the social worker, is a process in which both the client and social worker make decisions to identify the problem or the concern of the client, identify potential factors that contribute to the problem, prioritize immediate needs, set attainable goals, develop action plans and design strategies to systematically resolve the problem. At that point, they can then select evaluation criteria to measure the effectiveness of their intervention.

In their book, *Social Work Process and Practice* (2006), Watson and West suggest the following questions to help social workers to focus their thinking on the key elements of the problem-solving process:

- What is more important, the presenting problem or the underlying problem the client is facing?
- What is your role, to get things done or to enable the client to take more control of his/her situation?
- What is your expertise and contribution, being a holder of knowledge and skills or being a facilitator?

### **Phases of the Problem-solving Approach**

Compton *et al.* (2005) organize the social work problem-solving process into four major phases: engagement, assessment, intervention and evaluation. Each phase is action-oriented and successful completion of each phase leads into the next one.

#### ***Engagement***

Engagement is the first phase in the client-worker partnership. The primary tasks of the engagement phase include: personal and professional preparations to meet the client; introductions and orientation to the process; consideration and review of policy issues, legal factors, and ethical principles; and activities that lead the social worker to better understand the nature of the presenting problem and to identify a preliminary goal based on the potential client's need.

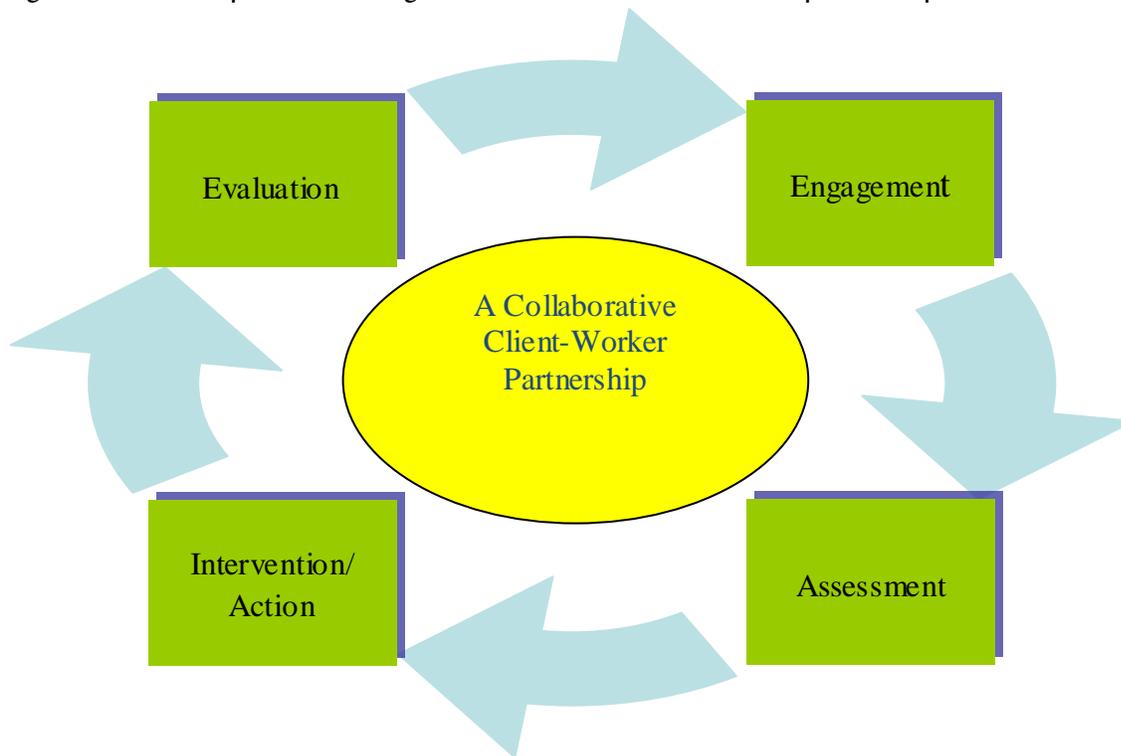
Effective engagement ideally leads to the development of rapport between the client and social worker so that they can work together on an assessment of the client's situation. This involves specifying the presenting problem, setting a common goal to address the problem, and developing a service plan. This initial agreement involves a preliminary contract between the client and the worker.

Early in the engagement phase, the social worker needs to create a suitable meeting place and encourage the client to describe and discuss in his or her own words and perspectives the nature of the problem and concern. Doing this helps the social worker gain an understanding of the nature of the problem as well as the client's experience and perspective on the problem. Note that the nature of the problem presented by the client may be misunderstood and distorted if the social worker is more concerned with understanding the problem only through his/her own lens. This can happen especially when the social worker is very intent on applying (perhaps based on his or her past professional experiences) a particular type of theory to understand, categorize, and diagnose a problem. This approach will hinder the social worker's ability to understand the personal views and unique experiences of the client. Therefore, from the beginning, social workers must stay aware that their understanding of the problem can significantly vary from that of their client.

When both the social worker and the client actively engage and participate in the process, they are more likely to have a successful outcome. In addition, the better the social worker understands and appreciates the client's expectations and problems the more actively the client will participate. However, it can also happen that during initial contacts in the engagement phase clients may show very little or no interest in genuinely reflecting upon their thoughts and feelings and sharing their experiences in relation to the problem. This reluctance may arise from their assumption that helping professionals will not be respectful or fully committed to helping them resolve their problems. To prevent this, social workers should try not to define problems for clients and act based on their problem definitions. Acting based on judgments, out of a need to control, punish, and/or oppress clients contradicts the values and ethical principles of the social work profession.

The engagement phase therefore helps social workers to explore and discuss the concern and preliminary goal from the client's perspective and problem definition. During the engagement phase, (1) respecting the client, (2) encouraging the establishment of a genuine partnership, (3) increasing motivation, and (4) enhancing understanding can build trust and generate a sense of success and optimism about resolving initial goals. "Starting where the client is" is an anchor phrase of social work practice to be applied throughout the engagement phase.

Figure 1. Phases of problem solving in a collaborative client-worker partnership



**Source: Compton, Cournoyer, & Galaway (2005)**

A critical step in the engagement phase involves the exploration of the client's perspective and experience of the problem and identification of preliminary goals. Exploration and identification help to shape a framework and create a context for action that the social worker and the client carry out in partnership. During this phase, clients and social workers have a common agenda, and problem exploration and goal identification will help guide the client and worker towards solutions. Without this step, the helping professional may assume control of the problem-solving process which is problematic because it makes the client feel powerless, and less likely to engage in his or her own solution development.

The following are the main tasks of the engagement phase

**Inviting participation.** One of the tasks of the social worker during the engagement phase is to create a suitable setting that invites the development of a collaborative partnership in which the potential client actively participates in defining and discussing his or her problem situation. To invite participation, the social worker can begin with the exchange of introductions. You, as a social worker, identify yourself, your professional affiliation, and your agency. You describe a preliminary purpose for the meeting, outline relevant policies including the nature and parameters of confidentiality.

**Understanding the presenting problem.** Social workers apply interviewing and effective communication skills to better understand the client's situation and experience. Active listening and empathic reflection are key skills for engendering client participation.

**Understanding the client's needs.** Clients anticipate that their contact with the social worker will give them the impetus to address the problem that they have. Understanding their needs will help to define goals and objectives meant to address the problem.

**Clarifying expectations.** Here the social worker is expected to be realistic and clarify the boundaries around what can and cannot be expected from the social worker-client interaction. This will help the client understand the nature of the partnership and manage his or her expectations of the process. Some expectations will not be met for any client (e.g., curing HIV); other expectations are specific to each client (e.g., managing addiction or helping to disclose HIV status).

#### *Client-Worker Partnership*

The client-worker partnership is an important concept in the problem-solving process that remarkably distinguishes social work from other professions. The client-worker partnership should acknowledge the different but equal contributions of the client and the social worker. Although clients and the social worker do not bring the same experiences, skills, knowledge, and ideas, what they contribute is equally important to the process of problem solving.

Social workers should demonstrate the following traits in order to strengthen the development of an effective client-worker partnership:

- Concern for the client's issues;
- Acceptance – being nonjudgmental, respecting the client's dignity, and being sensitive to the client's value systems and desires;
- Commitment to meet the needs of the client;
- Empathy – understanding the problem through the eyes of the client;
- Authority – recognizing the client's right to self-determination; appreciating independent decision making in contributing to the process of problem solving.

#### *Assessment*

Assessment is the second phase of the problem-solving approach. Assessment in the social work context involves the dynamics, dimensions, and activities directly related to data collection, analysis, goal setting, and planning. Assessment involves specific activities that lead to a more complete mutual understanding of the origin, nature, extent, and severity of the problem. It also involves approaching the problem-solving process within the context of the client's experience and circumstances. Effective assessment leads to a contract-based agreement between the client and the worker to develop a clear and specific service plan to move towards goal achievement.

During the assessment phase, the social worker and client start to incorporate and process relevant information, which they will then use to make decisions about the nature, extent, severity and resolution of the problem. This involves refining and clearly specifying the problem, setting corresponding goals, considering possible problem-solving alternatives, selecting a strategy for change, and developing a detailed step-by-step action plan to meet the goal. The result of a successful assessment should be a collaboratively designed service plan mutually agreed upon by the client and the social worker.

During the assessment phase, both the client and the social worker gather information about the following issues:

- How the problem started and developed to the stage it is currently;

- The perception and attitudes of the client towards the problem;
- The client's past experience in attempting to solve the same problem and the corresponding results;
- The client's expectations from the working partnership with the social worker;
- The client's personal system, the family, and the social environment that needs to be considered in developing alternative solutions;
- Sources of relevant information to understand the problem and the client's overall situation in relation to environmental factors; and
- Strengths, personal assets, coping strategies, and other client resources that could help to meet the goals.

Additional factors that need to be considered during the assessment include the complexity and urgency of the problem; evidence of practice effectiveness; legal and ethical principles; and client culture, motivation, capacity, and opportunity. The desired number of alternative service plans varies depending on these factors.

In order to develop focused solutions, social workers frequently ask the following questions to explore the presenting problem with the client:

- Does the client want to bring about change to his or her personal system?
- What alternative resolution could ideally be suitable to solve the problem?
- What causal factors could potentially be associated with the problem?
- Under what conditions did the problem originate?
- What is the duration of the problem?
- How frequently does the problem occur?
- Under what circumstances might the problem not occur?
- How severe is the problem to the client?
- What specific internal or external factors contribute to increase or decrease the intensity of the problem?
- Does the problem need an urgent intervention in order to be addressed?

### ***Intervention***

Intervention is the third phase of the problem-solving approach. The service plan, which is collaboratively developed by the client and the social worker during the assessment phase, will be extended into an action plan for implementation in the intervention phase. The intervention phase requires knowledge of different intervention and prevention programs, including their effectiveness, policies, practices, services, models, methods, and protocols. Interventions typically follow the development of a service agreement between the client and the social worker. The five fundamental roles of *social broker*, *facilitator*, *teacher*, *mediator*, and *advocate* characterize the intervention phase.

**Social broker.** Social workers play the role of a broker by linking clients with available community resources to help them achieve the goals specified in their service agreement. The role of social broker requires a solid knowledge of resource availability and rules and principles of operating agency procedures. Information and referral are the main roles assumed by social brokers.

**Facilitator.** In playing the role of facilitator, social workers help clients to identify and use their own coping strengths and resources so that they can pursue the desired change stated in the service agreement.

**Teacher.** Social workers play the role of teacher or educator when they provide clients with new information required to cope with problem situations and when they assist clients to develop new behaviours and practice new skills, as well as design alternative behaviour patterns.

**Mediator.** In the role of mediator, the social worker settles conflicts that may arise between the client and other persons, organizations, or systems. In this role, the social worker helps clients and others involved in conflict or dispute to find common ground from which they can interact smoothly and resolve conflict. A mediator facilitates communication, shares information, suggests alternative views, and negotiates resolutions between the two parties involved in the dispute.

**Advocate.** The social worker is no longer neutral when playing the role of an advocate. Rather, he or she tends to take a partisan role and speak on behalf of the client. Representing the client as advocates, social workers argue, debate, bargain, negotiate, and work to change systems or the environment for the benefit of the client. The role of an advocate differs from the role of a mediator in the sense that an advocate seeks to win for the client whereas a mediator facilitates resolving disputes on the basis of give and take on both parties (the client and other persons).

The following tasks characterize interventions that aim to activate client power:

**Mobilizing resources.** Effective intervention focuses on bringing change in the dimensions of the client system, the environment, and the interaction between the client system and the environment. Securing resources or linking clients with resources increases the flows of energy so that clients feel more comfortable, develop self-worth, and actively participate in the process to bring a desired change.

**Increasing self-awareness.** The social worker works to enhance clients' self-awareness. Self-awareness allows one to better understand that their feelings and thoughts can contribute to the problem situation. This awareness then allows one's strengths to be mobilized for problem solving. The use of *feedback* as a technique, by the social worker, can help clients to develop self-awareness and clearly see their situations and the ways in which they interact with others. Feedback is used with the assumption that clients can hear themselves when they express their feelings. The verbal and nonverbal responses of the social worker to the client's expression also help the client learn more about him or herself.

*Reflecting* on what the client expressed is another technique by which the social worker demonstrates the genuine and empathic commitment to value and share the client's experiences and feelings, but it also requires the client to reconsider his/her perspectives, an important facet of self-awareness. *Asking questions* about the process also increases the client's self-awareness because it forces the client to elaborate on his/her thoughts and feelings. *Interpreting* is yet another technique which the social worker can use, by suggesting alternative explanations about the event to help clients consider its importance in relation to their situation. *Setting limits* is a technique that helps clients gain greater control of their desire. The social worker also helps clients recognize their capacities, assets, abilities, potentials, and achievements by *looking for strengths*. *Confrontation* technique is used to help clients pinpoint distortions, discrepancies, contradictions, or inconsistencies in their experiences, feelings, or behaviour.

**Building social skills.** Problem solving requires a wide range of social and communication skills. All intervention roles we discussed earlier require the social worker to be equipped with social skills such as talking, listening, expressing, understanding, making requests, addressing differences, resolving conflicts or disputes, and providing support to others.

**Providing information.** Information is a resource and social workers need to share information, opinions, and advice with clients. Sharing information helps the social worker to establish a common understanding, provide clients with alternative views to their situation, and suggest possible actions that the client may undertake.

**Facilitating decision making.** Ideally, decision making involves some risks and some responsibility. And, for one reason or another, clients may have difficulty making decisions. Clients may even ask social workers to make decisions for them, which is not encouraged as part of a problem-solving process. Instead, social workers should encourage clients to make decisions by themselves because it is a key element in the logical problem-solving process. Facilitating logical discussions with clients on the advantages and disadvantages of different options will enhance the client's capacity to make rational decisions in planning and actions.

**Exploring meaning.** Sometimes, social workers may find clients who feel hopeless, pessimistic, and unable to *find meaning in their lives*—an essential element of the human condition. Social workers can help clients build meaning in their lives by considering essential themes:

- What is the meaning of life for you?
- What personal beliefs and hopes do you have that will help you to be successful in life?
- Are you a spiritual person?

- How is spirituality a part of your life?
- How does your belief system or religion help add meaning to your life?

### **Evaluation**

Evaluation is the fourth phase of the problem-solving approach. In the social work context, evaluation involves those activities related to review, evaluation, and ending. At the centre of the evaluation phase is the process of considering the nature, process, and outcomes of the problem-solving actions designed by both the client and social worker. More importantly, the evaluation phase is a stage where the client and the worker disengage from the planned process by concluding their action plans together and, sometimes, saying goodbye to each other. In principle, an effective evaluation phase results in a mutual understanding of the progress observed during the process of goal attainment and a reviewing of the steps that both the client and the worker took. Evaluation is generally considered the most important phase of social work. Sometimes, evaluation results may suggest the need for major revisions of the service plan agreement and/or potentially a different action plan. When this happens, both the client and the social worker may go back to the initial phases to redefine problems, revise goals, and modify action plans. In the evaluation phase, the client and the worker can terminate their contract agreement and working partnership, when one of the following conditions is fulfilled: (1) they agree that the desired goal has been attained, (2) they decide that the goal is unlikely to be accomplished, or (3) they believe that another helping professional or agency may better work with and serve the client.

## **5.2. Generalist Social Work Functions and Roles**

The activities of generalist social work practice fall broadly into three related functions: the function of **consultancy**-consulting with client systems regarding the resolution of problems, **resource management**-managing the resources of client systems and the social environment, and **education**-offering information to clients and systems in their impinging environment.

To fulfil these functions, social workers assume various practice roles and employ numerous practice strategies. Roles and correlated strategies are associated with each social function. Social workers' roles are expected patterns of professional behaviour. Roles assign certain behaviours and prescribe appropriate responses to particular situations. Three interrelated components make up each role: **a role concept**-how people believe they should act in a particular situation; **role expectations**- how others believe they should act when they occupy a particular status; and **role performance**- how people really do act. In other words, roles have psychological three components: psychological including perceptions and feelings; social including behaviours and the expectations of others; and behavioural components. Social work roles provide *direction for professional activities*. Roles define the nature of the transactions between practitioners and clients. Roles also define the nature of transactions among professional colleagues. Social work roles and their associated strategies suggest general ways to achieve goals.

Social work roles have been defined by several authors and variously presented as helping roles, role models, interventive roles and role sets. This presentation of social work roles accentuates the exchanges of information inherent in each role. Thus, clients' and social workers' tasks emphasize accessing, processing, utilizing and communicating information. The schema organizes these social work roles in the context of types of client systems-from the micro-level to the mid-level to the macro-level-and includes roles related to interactions with professional colleagues as well.

Strategies and tasks activate social work roles. A strategy is a plan that systematizes action, provides a "blue print" guide, or is the way intent is carried out in practice. Strategies involve the dimensions of planning and action. As strategies become actions, transactions take place in the person: environment context. Others react within these transactions and provide feedback or exchanges of information.

### **4.3.1. Consultancy Function**

Consultancy refers to the professional activities through which social workers and clients initiate change by clarifying clients' issues, discovering options, and developing plans of action. Consultancy relies on the expertise of clients and social workers alike. Social workers bring formally acquired knowledge, values, and skills; clients bring knowledge, values, and skills based on their personal,

organizational, and community life experiences. In other words, consultancy acknowledges that both social workers and client systems bring information and resources, actual and potential, which are vital for resolving the issue at hand.

As a collaborative process, consultancy draws up on the knowledge, values and skills of social workers and clients to clarify issues, recognize strengths, discuss options and identify potential courses of action. As consultants, social workers empower clients by respecting their competence, drawing upon their strengths and working with them collaboratively to discover solutions.

Through roles and strategies associated with consultancy, clients and social workers address personal, family, organizational, community or societal problems with clients at all system levels. With micro level clients-individuals, families, and small groups-the enabler role incorporates counselling strategies that generate change. At the mid level, the role of facilitator focuses on organizational development. The macro system role of social planner comprises strategies for research and planning to initiate macro level change. Finally, with the system of the social work profession, the colleague/monitor role provides collegial support and peer review to improve the competencies of practitioners and to strengthen the profession as a whole.

*Table 2: Summary of the functions, roles and strategies of generalist Social work*

<b>Function</b>	<b>Level of intervention</b>	<b>Roles</b>	<b>Strategies</b>
<b>Consultancy</b>	Micro level	Enabler	Empower clients in finding solutions
	Mid level	facilitator	Foster organizational development
	Macro level	Planner	Coordinate program and policy dev't through research and planning
	Social work system	Colleague/monitor	Monitor, guide and support professional acculturation
<b>Resource Management</b>	Micro level	Broker/advocate	Link clients with resources through case management
	Mid level	Convener/mediator	Assemble groups and organizations to network for resource development
	Macro level	Activist	Initiate and sustain social change through social action
	Social work system	Catalyst	Stimulate community service through interdisciplinary activities
<b>Education</b>	Micro level	Teacher	Facilitate information processing and provide educational programming
	Mid level	Trainer	Instruct through staff development
	Macro level	Outreach	Convey public information about social issues and social services through community education
	Social work system	Researcher/scholar	Engage in discovery for knowledge development

*Micro Level: Enabler Role*

In the enabler role, practitioners work with micro level clients to resolve challenges in social functioning. Counselling strategies complement the enabler role. As enablers, social worker practitioners work with individual, family, and small group client systems to improve individual social functioning. An enabler encourages action by helping “people identify their needs, clarify their problems and develop the capacity to deal effectively with their challenges.” In other words, enablers are change agents who “use

varying approaches in order to provide the conditions necessary for clients to achieve their purposes, meet life challenges, engage in their natural life development processes and carry out their tasks.”

In the context of work with groups, social workers as enablers help “the groups develop a supportive culture in which members can count on one another for mutual aid in overcoming problems.” As enablers, practitioners consult with individual and family client systems to improve social functioning by modifying behaviors, relationship patterns and social and physical environments.

*Mid Level: Facilitator Role*

The facilitator role describes work with formal groups, organizations or bureaucratic structures that promote more effective functioning in these multi-person systems. Organizational development elaborates this role. When formal groups or organizations identify problems they are having with their internal processes, structures or functions, they may consult with social workers to help them pinpoint the difficulties and develop solutions. Their initial task is to clarify mutual expectations and perspectives. As facilitators, social workers can teach other group members information about group process and functioning.

Facilitators activate the participation of organizational members in change efforts. By facilitating group processes, social workers encourage competent group functioning, stimulate intra-group support, observe group interaction, offer constructive feedback, and share information about group dynamics. As facilitators, social workers enhance linkages within organizations and help them counteract apathy and disorganization.

*Macro Level: Planner Role*

Working with community or societal structures to assess unmet needs, generalist social workers assume the role of planner to set goals, develop policies and initiate programs. Strategies associated with the planner role include research and planning. Social planners assist communities in planning to resolve community problems and provide health and human services.

According to Brieland, Costin and Atherton (1985), effective planners and organizers need to understand the social fabric of society, community sociology, social problems, community psychology, social planning and social Policy. Social planners use research and planning strategies to collect data systematically, explore alternative courses of action and involve community leaders and social service personnel in addressing community needs and developing community resources.

Social planners’ activities include coordinating services, developing programs, evaluating policies’ effectiveness and advocating social welfare reform. Social planners use research techniques such as needs assessments, service inventories, community profiles, environmental scans and field research to further their understanding of social problems and discover potential solutions. To facilitate planning, along with macro level clients, assess both resource capacities and environmental constraints in order to define the nature and scope of planning.

*Social Work System: Colleague and Monitor Roles*

Through their colleague and monitor roles, social workers uphold expectations for the ethical conduct of members of their profession. Consultative relationships among social work practitioners lead to sound practice and professional development. As colleagues, social workers develop working partnerships with other practitioners through their participation in professional organizations such as the NASW and its local membership groups and through their every day contacts with other professionals. As monitors, Social workers review the professional activities of peers to ensure quality and maintain professional standards.

**4.3.2. The Function of Resource Management**

In the resource management function, social workers stimulate exchanges with resources that client systems already use to some extent, access available resources that client systems are not using and develop resources that are not currently available. Social workers often help clients to access resources, coordinate the delivery of services and initiate new policies and programs. Resources are available assets or assets held in reserve that support social functioning, meet needs or resolve problems. Resources are sources of power and provide the impetus for change at any system level. Resources are

located in people, in interaction with others and within social institutions. These resource systems enhance clients' social functioning and promote their full participation in society.

Resources are not gifts bestowed by social workers. Instead, both social workers and clients play active role in managing resources. Empowerment-based resource management involves working collaboratively with clients. Social work involves linking clients to resources in a manner that enhances their self-esteem as well as their problem-solving capacities. Being actively involved in decision making empowers clients to assess and utilize resources more effectively. Resource management is empowering when it increases the client systems' own resourcefulness through coordinating, systematizing and integrating rather than controlling or directing.

Social work practitioners work at all system levels in their resource management roles. At the micro level, social workers use case management strategies to carry out their broker and advocate roles. With mid level clients, the convener and mediator roles network elements of social service delivery. As mobilizes who activate change at the macro level, social workers seek to reallocate societal resources through structural and institutional change in the socio-political arena. Finally, the catalyst role reflects the commitment of members of the social work profession to work together and with other professionals as catalysts to eliminate oppression and social justice.

*Micro Level: Broker and Advocate Roles*

The professional mandate of the social work profession, "to help people obtain resources," lays the foundation for the role of broker and advocate. Empowerment-oriented resource managers work collaborately with clients throughout broker or advocacy efforts. To empower clients, social workers will provide information about how to find resources that will be useful in making good decisions and resources that will be useful in implementing them. This in turn can enhance the clients' self-respect rather than leaving them feeling defeated or degraded.

As brokers, social workers link clients with available resources by providing information about resource options and making appropriate referrals. They work collaborately with clients to assess the clients' particular situation, facilitate the clients' choice from among alternative resources, facilitate client's connections with referral agencies and follow-up to evaluate the process .

As advocates, social workers act as intermediaries between clients' and other systems to address unmet needs and social inequalities as well as to protect clients' civil or legal rights. They ensure that clients have access to the services for which they qualify. Frequently, advocates function as spokespersons for clients in the bureaucratic maze of governmental structures. Advocates plead causes on behalf of clients to secure a needed resource or service or obtain a policy change or concession from a resistant, disinterested or unresponsive system.

Case management is a strategy for coordinating services and ensuring the accountability of service providers. In essence, case management is a series of actions and a process to ensure that clients of human services systems receive the services, treatment, care, and opportunities to which they are entitled. The purposes of case management include coordinating services and achieving continuity while simultaneously balancing accountability issues such as program costs and service effectiveness.

*Mid Level: Convener and Mediator Roles*

As conveners and mediators, social workers serve as intermediaries among representatives of groups or organizations when they gather to identify common problems, formulate goals, discuss potential solutions, mobilize resources, and implement and evaluate plans of action. They work with formal groups and organizations to coordinate resource distribution and development.

Social workers as conveners and mediators use networking strategies to coordinate and develop services, and to develop coalitions among diverse groups and organizations around common purposes or shared goals. Social workers develop networks with human service organizations, other social structures such as business and industry, and influential community leaders.

Through the convener and mediator roles, social workers and midlevel clients can work cooperatively to identify or address gaps and barriers in the delivery of services, to plan ways to address unmet service delivery needs and to advocate policies that extend social provisions and provide

necessary funding. Collaborative planning enhances the effectiveness of networking strategies. Working collaboratively empowers participants to generate midlevel change.

Conveners and mediators create linkages between systems; improve interaction among organizations, and mobilize organizational resources. Social workers serve in this role through their work with interdisciplinary teams and interagency ventures. When controversy or conflicts of interest arise among participants, social workers as mediators use their skills for negotiating differences and resolving conflicts.

*Macro Level: Activist Role*

Generalist social workers are in positions to identify societal conditions detrimental to the well-being of clients—a view which informs the social worker as activist. As activists, social workers bring together key social and economic leaders at the community or society level to initiate social change. Strategies of social action or social advocacy promote social justice by influencing the allocation of resources, lobbying or legislative change and initiating court actions.

Social workers raise the public's consciousness about social problems and injustice. They mobilize available resources to change these adverse conditions. In social activism, social work activities range from garnering resources to bringing social reform. Social reform involves fighting for changes in laws, regulations, etc., on behalf of a whole class of persons or segment of the society. Therefore, advocacy aims at removing the obstacles or barriers that prevent people from exercising their rights or receiving the benefits and using the resources they need.

As a strategy of activism, social action involves coordinated efforts to achieve institutional change in meeting needs, resolving social problems, and remedying social injustices or enhancing citizen's quality of life. In social action efforts, social workers take sides to pursue social reform and social change.

Mobilizing efforts help people and organizations combine their resources to achieve goals of mutual importance. This is accomplished by bringing clients together, enhancing lines of communication, clarifying goals and steps to achieve them, and devising plans for gaining greater support.

*Social Work System: Catalyst Role*

As catalysts, social workers organize professional endeavours with social work colleagues and through interdisciplinary relationships to develop an optimal system of social services. Through community service strategies, social workers act on their ethical commitment to serve as volunteers.

In the catalyst role, social workers press for innovation and change. Social workers have an ethical commitment to modify the delivery of services so that services are more humane, to influence social and environmental policies in order to champion social justice and equality and to urge the adoption of a worldview that embraces global interdependence. Through professional organizations, social workers lobby at the state and federal levels and provide expert testimony. As catalysts, social workers initiate, foster and sustain interdisciplinary cooperation to highlight client, local, national and international issues.

**4.3.3. The Function of Education**

The social work function of education represents an empowering information exchange between a client system and a social work practitioner. Mutual sharing of knowledge and ideas are central to the educational function. In fact, educational processes at all system levels reflect partnerships of co-learners and co-teachers. Freire (1990) supports dialogue as the most effective educational tool. Collaborative learning presumes that client systems are self-directing, possess reservoirs of experiences and resources on which to base educational experiences and desire immediate applications of new learning. The education function of social work respects the knowledge and experience that all parties contribute.

Educational roles encompass social work activities at all system levels. The teaching role expands micro level clients' base of information through learning strategies. At the mid level, the trainer role facilitates staff development. At the macro level, the outreach role uses community education strategies to provide information to the general public. Finally, with respect to the professional system, social workers as researchers and scholars share their research findings and practice wisdom with other professionals.

*Micro Level: Teacher Role*

Social workers as teachers use learning strategies to promote client's development of skills and enhance their base of information. To affirm client's existing knowledge and skills, social workers select collaborative learning strategies to implement educational activities. As Sophie Freud (1987) the teaching role in social work empowers client systems with information to stimulate effective mastery of life tasks, role performance and control over one's life. Armed with the power of information, clients are in a position of strength to make informed decisions.

Through teaching strategies, social workers strengthen clients with information to resolve current issues and to prevent other difficulties from emerging. Clients benefit from information that will strengthen their interpersonal effectiveness, increase their ability to access resources, and establish a base on which to make informed decisions. These educational experiences help clients develop skills related to becoming more assertive, resolving conflicts constructively, parenting, planning for retirement, and providing care for the elderly.

*Mid Level: Trainer Role*

Through the trainer role, social workers provide instruction to members of midlevel systems such as formal groups and organizations. Among the training strategies that social workers use are workshops, staff development, in-service experiences and other types of continuing education.

Trainers are educational resource specialists for formal groups and organizations. They make presentations, serve as panelists, conduct public forums and facilitate workshop sessions. Successful training strategies require a careful assessment of staff development needs, clear goal of what the organization seeks the ability to convey information through appropriate training formats and concrete evaluation process.

*Macro Level: Outreach Role*

Through outreach role, social workers educate or inform clients about social issues and problems, describe social injustices and suggest social services and policies to address these issues. They help citizen's to broaden or increase their awareness of problems in a wide variety of areas such as poverty , health care, stress, substance abuse, child abuse and neglect and other family related problems through community-based educational efforts. Informing the general public about p public and private human service organizations that makes people more aware of these resources and services and in turn, enhances their accessibility. Education through public information facilitates preventive actions.

*Social Work System: Researcher/Scholar*

As researchers and scholars, social workers add to social work's base of theory and evaluate practice and program out comes. These activities link social work practice and theory through knowledge-development strategies.

For social workers, research means building theories, designing practice strategies and measuring outcomes. Professional scholarship that contributes to the professional knowledge base is an obligation shared by all social workers. Therefore, preparation for social work practice necessarily includes a strong research component.

Research builds a theoretical base that informs social workers' understanding of human behaviour and the social environment. Social workers use this broad base of research to enhance social service programs, develop equitable social welfare policies, and improve social work practice methods. In addition, social workers use research methods to evaluate their practice, assess program effectiveness, and analyze social policies.

**4.4. Integrating Generalist Functions**

In practice, social workers interweave the functions of consultancy, resource management and education. For example, in addition to counselling, consultancy may involve linking clients with resources and teaching them new skills. Similarly, even though education is identified as a separate function, educational processes are inherent in all other social work activities as well. Rather than compartmentalizing these roles, this trilogy of social work functions provides an organizing schema for generalist social workers to construct and integrate multifaceted interventions.