

**ROLE OF SOCIAL WORKER IN LOCAL ADMINISTRATION: A THEORETICAL
OVERVIEW**

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Abstract

Social work is an academic and professional discipline that seeks to facilitate the welfare of communities, individuals, families, and groups. It may promote social change, development, cohesion, and empowerment. Underpinned by theories of social sciences and guided by principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility, and respect for diversities, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance well-being. A practicing professional with a degree in social work is called a social worker. Examples of fields a social worker may be employed in are Poverty relief, life skills, and community development, forensic, industrial relations, child protection, and elder protection, Women 's rights, human rights, addictions, rehabilitation, disaster management, mental health, disabilities and Administration. Social Work Administration is also one of the important method. Now the researcher study about the Role of Social Worker in local Administration.

Generally, a local administrative unit (LAU) is a low level administrative division of a country, ranked below a province, region, or state. Not all countries describe their locally governed areas this way, but it can be descriptively applied anywhere to refer to counties, municipalities, etc. An administrative body for a small geographic area, such as a city, town, county, or state. A local government will typically only have control over their specific geographical region, and cannot pass or enforce laws that will affect a wider area. Local governments can elect officials, enact taxes, and do many other things that a national government would do, just on a smaller scale. The local administrative system means the systems and practices of establishing administrative regional divisions and setting up local administrative organs in order to facilitate the implementation of local administration. The social work administrator is focused on the future. Administrators are decision makers, concerned about the well-being of a total system versus one particular client.

This work requires knowledge about social policy and the delivery of social services. Administrators must have an understanding of human behavior, a commitment to

social work ethics and values, and a vision for the future. Today's agencies and human services organizations are more complex to run than a traditional business. Having a strong social work administrator to steer the direction of an organization is crucial. This means working on budgets, designing programs to fulfill the needs of the population, evaluating the effectiveness of existing programs, identifying areas that lack support, managing overarching strategy for the community or department, and working on policies.

Social work administrators must also have an understanding of social services, human behavior and social problems as social work as a profession is still rooted in its commitment to being consumer-oriented and servicing disenfranchised populations. It's important that prospective administrators have a sophisticated understanding of business and feel the call to be a leader. In crucial, This means working on budgets, designing programs to fulfill the needs of the population, evaluating the effectiveness of existing programs, identifying areas that lack support, managing overarching strategy for the community or department, and working on policies. In this way Social Worker has to play in many roles in development of Local Administration. A Guide, Planner, Developer, Resource mobilize, coordinator, administer, Policy maker, Enabler, Facilitator, etc roles played by the Social Worker in Local Administration. In this sense The Researcher Study about the Role of Social Worker in Local Administration. Roles are highly appreciable. The Study is Purely Theoretical. The Study is based on secondary data sources. The necessary information about the Role of Social Worker in Local Administration state and its various components are collected from Books, Journals, Internet Source or related topic. The Researcher study about the Role of Social Worker in Local Administration in detailed. The Research Work includes, Concept of Local Administration, Methodology, and Role of Social Worker in Local Administration.

Keywords: Social Worker, Local Administration, Community Development, Community Social Worker, Role of Social Worker, etc.

Introduction

Social work is a professional service and also it is helping process. In my point of view there is no profession is working along with people i.e. Social work is only the profession which is directly working with people. Therefore social work means it is a method of working with people in its nature. Social Work as a profession it is a helping process. It means it is a process. All of a suddenly cannot solve the problem of the people it takes its

own time because we are working with human relations not with machineries or any materials. Moreover Social Work methods, knowledge, skills and principles direct a social worker to incorporate how to work with human relations. Social Work has huge and vast scope as large as society itself. There is no field that we can use this helping process. Fields of Social Work are child development, women empowerment, labour welfare, correctional administration, health setting, youth development, and so on. And particularly in Community development which has local administration. One can use social work methods and knowledge in local administration effectively. No other profession is as effective as social work profession and dealing with people. Social work is a profession which deals with various problems and issues systematically and scientifically. It empowers individuals, groups and communities. It requires specific knowledge, skills and techniques to Practice.

Social work is a profession primarily concerned with the remedy to psycho-social problems and deficiencies which exists in the relationship between the individual and his social environment. Therefore, it is visualized that social work is scientific process for helping to the needy suffering from material deficiencies, physical disabilities, mental disorders, emotional disturbances and so on by using knowledge in human relationship and methods and skills in dealing with them. Speaking in a nut shell, social work intended to assist individuals, families, social groups and communities in sorting out their personal and social problems and permanently solving those problems through a systematic process. In this regard social work process can be used to get success in the local administration. Community Organization which is one of the method of social work is the very best to community development.

Definitions of social work

We can easily understand the Social Work concept with some definitions.

Alice Cheyney (1926), stated, “Social work includes all the voluntary attempts to extend benefits in response to the needs which are concerned with social relationships and which avail themselves of scientific knowledge and methods”.

Friedlander (1951) defined, “Social work is a professional service, based on scientific knowledge and skill in human relations, which assists individuals, alone or in groups, to obtain social and personal satisfaction and independence”.

Stroup (1960) defined social work as “an art of bringing various resources bear on individual, group and community needs by the application of a scientific method of helping the people to help themselves”.

Indian Conference of Social Work (1957) unanimously defined social work as “a welfare activity based on humanitarian philosophy, scientific knowledge and technical skills for helping individuals, groups or community, to live rich and full life”.

Methods of Social Work

Generally method implies to systematic way of doing something. In social work, method is understood as the systematic and planned way of helping the people. The main concern of social work is to solve psycho-social problems of individuals, groups and communities through the conscious application of knowledge in methods, tools, techniques and skills of social work. In this task, the social worker has to be equipped with all the necessary methods of social work that ease his work to help the people in solving their own problems. Social work as a professional practice mainly uses the following methods while accomplishing its objectives:

1. Social case work:

It is primary method of social work. It deals with individual problems through one to one relationship which is guided by professional knowledge of the social case worker. Under method the social case worker attempts to repair the impaired relationship of the client with his social environment and through a guided interaction he/she enables the client to adapt with his/her social environment. Through this method the case worker discovers different aspects of the clients problem, prepares an appropriate treatment plan and finally with professional knowledge in social relationship tries to bring about necessary changes in the attitude and behaviour of the client in favor of his own growth and development.

2. Social group work

Social group work is another primary method of social work. It is a process in which the individuals in a social group are helped by a professionally qualified worker, who guides their interaction through planned programme activities so that they may be able to relate themselves with others and find growth opportunities in accordance with their needs and capacities towards the noble end of individual group and community development. In this

method the group worker uses the group as a potential tool for the positive change and personality development of individuals. In group work individuals in the group are most important and all programme activities revolve around their needs for development. Through the group work process they are helped to improve their relationship and personality traits which may help them to develop themselves and their community as whole.

3. Community Organization

Community organization as a method of social work is a process through which efforts are directed towards meeting the community needs by organizing human and material resources of the community. Identifying problems, finding resources relevant to their needs, developing and organizing inter-personal and inter-group relationship, planning and executing effective programme activities are some of the specific activities in community organization method. Organized and collaborative effort of the members of the community for their own development is the main concern of this method.

4. Social welfare administration:

Social welfare administration is one of the secondary methods of social work. It refers to a process through which social policy is transformed into social service. In the other words, it is a process to manage the affairs of social work or social welfare. Developing programmes, mobilizing resources, recruiting and involving suitable personnel, proper organization, coordination, providing skillful leadership, supervision and guidance of staff, budgeting and evaluation are some of the specified activities involved in social welfare administration method.

5. Social work research

Social work research is another important method of social work. It refers to the systematic and critical enquiry of the questions encountered by social work professional in the field of application. Through this method efforts are made to find answers to the existing and emerging problems of social work so as to make them use in the practical fields. Social work research like that of other social sciences is contributing a lot to the store house of its knowledge and helping in the better planning and implementation of social work programmes.

6. Social action

Social action method of social work is the one that is used to bring about desirable changes in the defective system for ensuring social progress. Through this method attempts are made to mobilize people, to create awareness on existing problems, to organize them and to encourage them to raise their voice against undesirable practices which hampers their development and finally to create pressure for bringing about suitable legislation for social progress. This method seeks to relate the community needs with the solution of the problems mainly through collective initiatives.

These methods will get result when people participate in the helping process.

Objectives of the study:

1. To Understand Social Work profession.
2. To get clarify that local administration is one of the setting of Social Work Practice.
3. To study how can be the decentralization will get success through Social Work profession which is studying as helping process?

Methodology

The present study being overviewed and collected theoretically with the help of secondary sources.

Meaning of Local Administration and Decentralization

Decentralization is the process of redistributing or dispersing functions, powers, people or things away from a central location or authority. While centralization, especially in the governmental sphere, is widely studied and practiced, there is no common definition or understanding of decentralization.

Decentralization means assigning both the power and responsibility to the lower levels from centre in decision making, financial and administrative aspects with accountability. The basic idea of decentralization is sharing the decision-making authority with lower levels in the organization; power can be shared within the system. The panchayat raj system is really an effective instrument of participation. In order to make the panchayats and edifice of democracy, they should be given more powers, more autonomy and financial

resources. It also means to overcome the prevalent socio-economic deficiencies in rural society.

Community Social Workers

Community social workers help communities function. Some work directly with individuals, conducting needs assessments and making referrals to resources in the community. Others assess needs on a larger scale. They may plan and administer programs. One type of community social work practice is community organization. Social workers may be community builders or community organizers. They may be employed by various nonprofits and grassroots organizations to raise funds, write grants, drum up support, plan infrastructure. Social Worker do study the entire community as an unit. Find out what can be done to reach the programmes to needy people. The vital aim of local government is to participation of all the people in administration process. Social Work methods guides, there is no help without involving the needy. Social workers not only help people with immediate needs, but set up systems that will endure after they leave.

Steps in Community Organization:

1. Social Investigation
2. Integration
3. Issue in Identification and Analysis
4. Core Group Formation
5. Group Work and Group Meeting
6. Role Playing
7. Mobilization of Action
8. Evaluation or Reflection
9. Formation of Community Based Organization
10. Phase Out

Different Roles of Social Worker in Local Administration

“...most of us have a pretty good idea of what we what we expect from a doctor or a teacher. For social work, the role expectations are not quite as clearly understood by the general public. Perhaps this is because there are so many professional roles in social work. The number and diversity of social work roles provide opportunity for a great deal of creativity in practice.”

—Suppes, M., Cressey Wells, C.

Some of the many professional roles in Social Work are

1. Enabler

The social worker facilitates the process in the community for a change. He does not carry out any work by himself but he enables the community to do the work. The worker gives importance to the local government process than the product. Therefore the people learn the process rather than worried about the results and consequences of the process. By the role of enabler the worker would create independency among the people by which avoid the dependency syndrome. The social worker is present with the people and encourages and gives different directions so that the people are able to decide what they would like to do and how they would like to do. The social worker only initiates the process and people have to follow and at the time of difficulties they refer back to the social worker. Therefore the role of the social worker is to make the people to understand the local government system and its objectives to stand on their own.

2. Guide

The Social Worker instead of doing anything on his own guides the members of the community in the process of local government. The Social Worker is not a person to shoulder the responsibility or solving problems of the people. Instead he has to make the people to respond for which the organizer provides the various avenues and shows different roots while dealing with the community problems. As a guide the worker provides the needed information. He has to be a person with lots of information and ideas. For example in a community there are many poor people who have not got work under MGNREG scheme and their presence in the community is considered to be more of nuisance than as a human resource. In such a situation the Social Worker should be able to provide information about the MGNREGS, and ways to get employed, the terms and conditions for availing of the scheme etc. have to be told to the people. Once the Social Worker is able to provide information which is useful to the people from the neighboring people may also approach in getting some guidance from the Social Worker. This would surely fetch credit to the Social Worker as well as gains the good will of the people.

3. Mediator

The social worker intervenes in disputes between parties to help them find compromises, reconcile differences, or reach mutually satisfying agreements. The mediator takes a neutral stance between the involved parties. A mediator is involved in resolving disputes between members of the community to create healthy and developmental environment if any kind of

disputes occur in the execution of local administration. The social worker is involved in the process of making referrals to link a community people to needed resources. Social work professionals do not simply provide information. They also follow up to be sure the needed resources are attained.

4. Advocate

The role of the advocate is to be a representative or persuade the members of the community and prepare them to be a representative as well as represent the issues to the concerned body to bring a solution to the unmet needs. The advocacy role is an important role to the present context. The needs and problems of the people have to be represented and the required support and networking is essential to increase the pressure on the oppressive forces. In the role of advocate the social worker champions the rights of others. The social worker speaks on behalf of the community when community is unable to do so, or when community speaks and no one listens. The advocate represents the interests of the community to gain access or services or improve the quality of services which may be hampered by other forces. An advocate argues, debates, bargains, negotiates, and confronts the environment on behalf of the community to get benefits from local government. In this role, social workers fight for the rights of others and work to obtain needed resources by convincing others of the legitimate needs and rights of members of society. Social workers are particularly concerned for those who are needy or are unable to speak up for themselves. Social Worker publicly supports and recommends in fulfillment of the needs of people. He works on behalf of people and promotes them to involve or participate in local government. Advocacy can occur on the local, country, state or national level.

5. Manager

Management role is involved in locating services and assisting community to access those services. Management is especially important for complex situations and for those who are homeless or elderly, have chronic physical or mental health issues, are disabled, victims of domestic or other violent crimes, or are vulnerable children in the community. Social Workers, because of their expertise in a wide variety of applications, are well suited to work as managers and supervisors in local government. As managers, they are better able to influence policy change and/or development, and to advocate, on a larger scale, for all underprivileged people.

6. Educator

Social Workers are often involved in teaching people about resources and how to develop particular skills such as Functions of Grama Panchayat, programmes and facilities available in panchayats. He puts his efforts to make them aware of decentralization system and how it runs. The benefits if they participate in local governance. The Social Worker transfers or transmits information, thought, knowledge etc. to the members of the community. Sharing of information enables the community to be better prepared and empowered with information. The communication between the worker and the community and within the community is essential. The people have to be prepared and known about the various effects of consequences of the community needs and panchayat system. The Social Worker as educator conveys information to the community and the broader environment. Worker provides information necessary for coping with problem situations, assists the community in practicing new behaviors or skills, and teaches through modeling to strengthening local administration. The Social Worker provides information necessary for decision making. The Social Worker with the required qualities and skills will be able to work with the people. While working with the people of different background or from different geographical set up the different roles can be applied. All the roles need not be or cannot be applied in all the settings to all the problems. Moreover there is no one role which is superior or inferior and while dealing with any problem of community the worker has to use more than one role. Therefore depending upon the situation and the needs and problems of the community appropriate role has to be applied.

7. Communicator

The communication takes place by individual contact, group meetings, group discussions, public meetings etc. At times the Social Worker takes an upper hand and considers that the people are illiterate and ignorant and hence the dealings with the people become a master slave relationship. In order to avoid any such undesired relationship the Social Worker has transparency and communicates with the people. The communication enables better interaction which leads to a healthy relationship and cooperation for further action and response. The Social Worker in order to disseminate the information to the people can use different techniques like skit, role plays, street plays and audio and video shows. The worker can train the people in all these communicative techniques. This will be more effective if he is able to organize the community and train them in this regard. The people are an effective

communicative channel and a fast reaching channel. The local groups like women's group, youth groups are other channels for communication. By giving the responsibility to such groups to communicate to all other members in the community will also be helpful in reaching out the whole community. There should not be any secrecy or suppression of information which would only create undesired results.

8. Facilitator

The social worker helps the community to articulate their needs, clarify and identify their problems, explore resolution strategies, select and apply intervention strategies, and develop their capacities to deal with their own problems more effectively in the local government. A facilitator provides support, encouragement, and suggestions to the community so that they may proceed more easily and successfully in completing tasks or problem solving. A facilitator assists the community to find coping strategies, strengths and resources to produce changes necessary for accomplishing goals and objectives. A facilitator helps community alter their environment. In this role, social workers are involved in gathering groups of people together for a variety of purposes including community development, self advocacy, political organization, and policy change. Social workers are involved as group therapists and task group leaders.

9. Catalyst

In the process of Social work practice the Social worker retains his identity at the same time enables the people to be empowered. The people gain accessibility and control over resources and acquire skills in decision making. The Social worker accelerates the actions and reactions so that people are able to achieve the desired results. As a catalyst the organizer is able to increase the response level of the people. The catalyst role further enables the people to become independent and become expert in responding to their own needs in maintaining local administration.

10. Organizer

Social Workers are involved in many levels of community organization and action including economic development, union organization, and policy specialists. Worker also motivates people to identify their needs.

11. Counselor

The Social Worker understands the community and enables the community to understand itself. At the time of difficulty in providing facilities to the individuals or the groups are given

the required counseling to proceed in the correct direction by local government. One of the very basic dimensions of counseling is to be a patient listener. Usually everyone likes others to listen to them and hesitate to listen to others. Moreover as a counselor he has to step into the shoes of others, understand and respond. People when they are in need there should be someone to listen to them. When people approach there should be someone to attend too. In all such situations the Social Worker can easily step in as a counselor in helping the people.

11. Consultant

The Social Worker enjoys the confidence of the people and advises them in matters of vital interest. The Social Worker becomes a person with lots of knowledge and information which is being shared with the people. As a consultant the Social Worker makes himself available to the people who are in need because the Social Worker has lots of information and expertise which could be availed by those who are in need of it. The Social Worker instead of working in the field in one area will be able to contribute his expertise with many individuals and groups by performing the role of a consultant.

12. Collaborator

The Social Worker joins hands in performing his task with his colleagues with other likeminded people and organizations. The worker has to have interpersonal relationship and public relation skills. Nowadays community approaches a problem not with their personal capacity they also depend on the neighboring community or organization. Similarly other community or organizations may also look for the cooperation and collaboration of different organization. There are also organization working towards a similar problem where in a collaborative effort will strengthen both the organization. Therefore the role of collaborator is very much needed for net working of similar and likeminded community and efforts for a common cause.

Conclusion

Social workers in the field of community development can be found in many areas of practice and a variety of settings. The work is often not situated within legislated programs, and workers may or may not be required to be registered with the provincial regulatory body. Community practice can involve community economic development such as improving local economies in rural areas experiencing out-migration, or it can include working with citizens, groups, and organizations to interface with large systems, institutions, and the political process. Social workers who practice from a community

development or community organizing perspective attempt to address the systemic issues that create social problems. In many cases, they may also be engaged in the kinds of individual problem-solving practices embodied in many social work positions.

Social work involves understanding the power dynamics and social relations that govern the relationships between various structures and diverse communities and working to achieve social justice through structural change. If the issue is poverty, for example, a social worker practicing from a community perspective may focus on the political economy that creates these conditions. This may include trying to address the policies that perpetuate poverty or organizing groups around the issue to lobby decision makers for change through local administration.

The main approach to this work is a belief that people acting together have a great capacity to improve their own circumstances with the help of decentralized system, as they have first-hand knowledge of the situation and what needs to happen to change things for the better. In fact, this reflects the fundamental values of the social work profession generally. Some of the tools utilized by social workers are developing community awareness, leadership identification and development, creating strategic alliances, adult education, fostering collaboration, and building community capacity. The social worker can be involved in various large-scale social movements and broad issues such as homelessness, or in the development of programs or projects and research.

To achieve a better understanding of conditions from social, economic, and political perspectives, social workers practicing at the local government level concern themselves with matters of public policy and often engage with others in policy analysis. The analysis assists in developing strategies towards achieving some form of sustainable change. In any situation, the communities of focus must play a leading role in defining the issues and developing the solutions. Social workers spend much time working with leaders and allies to identify common goals among community members. The social worker becomes a leading organizer to generate a strategic direction in the context of goals identified and defined by the group and that the group works toward. The social worker shares any and all information related to the presenting problem of the community or issue so that stakeholders are better able to participate in formulating solutions whatever problems arise in the execution of local administration.

Social workers who practice as community organizers or developers are guided by the ethics and standards of the profession and by principles of sustainable community development. Research approaches most commonly used in this area of practice are qualitative, such as participatory action or ethnographic research. From a community perspective, the social work role is to conduct assessments and share information with the identified community of interest. Research knowledge is often used to formulate the steps needed in developing a strategy. In turn, the social worker learns from the people in their communities, enhancing collaboration and partnerships that lead to achieving real social change. Local administration will be going to fulfill its objective only with the help of Social Work profession which enables local administration more effective.

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