

**A STUDY OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES OF TRAINED  
SOCIAL WORKERS AND VOLUNTARY SOCIAL WORKERS  
IN GUJARAT**

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## Table of Content

Sr. No		Page No.
	Introduction	1
1.	Research Framework	
	1.1 Conceptual Framework of the Research	2
	1.2 Rationale	13
	1.3 Research Questions and Research Objectives	16
	1.4 Explanations of the Terms used in the Enquiry	16
2.	Research Methodology	
	2.1 Philosophical Worldviews	18
	2.2 Method Adopted for the Research Enquiry	18
	2.3 Data: Sources, Collection and Analysis	20
	2.4 Chapterisation	25
3.	Major Findings	26

## **Introduction**

Social work has existed since the beginning of society. However, its institutional form is about a century old. In the contemporary era, the meaning of the term 'Social Work' varies according to the context. For a layperson, social work stands for any kind of help to the needy. While in the opinion of others, it implies charitable and philanthropic activities. With the changing demand of the society, social work established itself as a profession with the scientific knowledge base and education pedagogy. Institutionalisation and professionalisation of 'help' is the hallmark of the evolution of modern social work.

Social work in India has its deep roots in ancient civilisation. Various religious teachings and socio-cultural customs encouraged it. After that, industrialisation and urbanisation in India under the colonial period created complex societal issues, which led to the emergence of professional social work in India in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Along with this novel institutionalised approach in the form of the social work profession, another sphere existed, which is known as Voluntary Social Work. Voluntary social workers have been enormously engaging in various issues pertaining to social reforms and development. This sector has also contributed through involvement in advocacy and social action.

In India, professional and voluntary social workers coexist. These categories possess distinct features and have their own challenges. It is essential to study and understand these categories extensively to understand the nature of social work practice in India. This research focuses on both the categories of social workers in order to get a holistic insight into social work practices. In addition to this, the present study has paid attention to the identity of social workers in India.

# **1. Research Framework**

The fundamental concepts of this study are social work practice, professional social workers, voluntary social workers, and professional practice.

## **1.1 Conceptual Framework of the Research**

At the outset, it is necessary to understand the concept of social work (social work). The *Oxford English Dictionary* defined "Social work..... As a work of benefit to those in need of help, especially professional or voluntary service of a specialised nature concerned with community welfare and family or social problems arising mainly from poverty, mental or physical handicap, maladjustment, delinquency etc. Hence a social worker, one who undertakes social work, especially someone professionally trained."

This definition emphasises activities, which help needy and fulfil local social demands by professional or voluntary attempts. The footprints of 'Social Work' can be traced in 'charity' and 'philanthropic' approaches. Professional social work grew out of poverty and complex social problems. Mary Richmond in 1898 named it as 'applied philanthropy'. Simon Patten in 1990 coined the term 'Social Workers' for friendly visitors.

Cheney in 1926 explained, "Social Work includes all voluntary attempts to extend benefits, which are made in response to needs, are concerned with social relationship and avail themselves of scientific knowledge and employ scientific methods (Cheney; 1926)." This explanation defines 'social work' as a kind of work or activity and talks about its purpose. It does not carry the sound of the 'professional' form of 'social work', though it talks about scientific knowledge base and techniques. It was the beginning of the journey of professionalisation of social work.

In 1955, W. Friedlander defined it as "..... a professional service, based on scientific knowledge and skill in human relations, which assist individuals, alone or in groups, to obtain social and personal satisfaction and independence." It focuses on social work as a 'Profession' and highlights knowledge and skill sets as a required tool for the intervention.

However, the National Association of Social Workers, USA proposed a working definition in 1956, which defined 'social work Practice' as, ".....like the practice of all other professions, is

recognised by a constellation of values, purpose, sanction, knowledge and method. It is the particular context and configuration of this constellation which makes it social work practice (NASW; 1956 mentioned in Singh R.R. 2014)." This definition constructed three pillars, i.e. knowledge, skills and values of the social work profession and increased a degree of 'professionalisation' of social work. Along with this, it mentioned the 'contextualisation' phenomenon of social work practice.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Social Work Profession has widened its horizons, with its footprints in over 125 countries. Though, the quest to define social work is still going on. In July 2014, the global definition of social work was modified by the IFSW and IASSW has given below:

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.

The IFSW-IASSW definition has proved as a significant milestone in the journey of social work. It has indicated changes in thrust areas, goals and focus of the profession. In addition to this, a very significant phenomenon is, it explains social work as *Practice-Based Profession*. However, it could not define the term *Practice-based profession* precisely.

Social work is a *Practice-based profession*, where theory and practice have mutual relationships. Desai K. (2013) claimed in his doctoral thesis, "... the congruence between theory and practice has important implications for both social work education/training and social work practice. The practice-orientation in social work demands the application of theories in practice, on the one hand, and the revision of theories based on practical knowledge, on the other. The two might be integrated through research on the new ideas that are generated through field practice in light of a body of theoretical knowledge that already exists (Desai K.; 2013)." This explanation suggests that the relationship between theory and practice is peculiar to Social Work. The implication of practice into theory makes this field unique. Various scholars, committee reports, conferences

and organisations, while defining social work, consider the changes in the approaches, techniques and 'context' of social work practice.

The postmodern arguments put forward the approach of contextualised social work practice. This approach asserts to have knowledge and understanding of local conditions (social problems, welfare policies, local values and attitudes, culture and traditions, decision-making processes) is very useful and must if we want to address problems and design social work methods in an adequate way. Based on this argument, instead of defining social work as one thing, one practice, and one social system; the researcher argues that social work is continuously redefining itself. Because it is deeply rooted in human interactions and the social climate of the place, where it is practised. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the social context, which constructs social realities.

This argument has a logical base of social constructivism, which belongs to the postmodern paradigm. Social constructivism is the theoretical underpinning of this research work.

### **1.1.1 Social Work: From the Lens of Social Constructivism**

social work from the lens of constructivism can be defined as what social workers do. According to the social constructivist approach, human beings 'construct' social phenomena by their interactions. Changes in the interactions lead to change in the social phenomenon. Likewise, change in societal needs demands a novel approach to social work intervention. It means that if someone does social work in one way and says 'This is the social work', it is in that situation. Suppose another person claims to be doing it in another context, with the same or different way suited to the context. It is also called social work. It explains how any social situation offers an opportunity to be flexible and to achieve change.

However, it is considered as an extreme viewpoint of constructivism. It claims that any work for the betterment of society is social work. For instance, an engineer builds a bridge of excellent quality, which is ultimately for the betterment of society. Can we consider it as social work? The answer is no. This concept is very vague. There is a difference between social work and other professions. Therefore, in the extreme viewpoint of constructivism, social work can be defined on the basis of specialised and unique functions of the social work profession. On a broader

scale, all the other professions' work for the betterment of society is limited to the available social context. (E.g., an engineer in the example above). Whereas, the social work profession claims to work for social improvement, and always attempt to change and improve the given social context.

Payne M. (2006) categorised professions into three categories. According to him, the first category of the profession includes doctors, teachers, nurses, psychologists, engineers, etc. who focus on their client's concerns and interests. Social order and social situation are the contexts for them, and they help people within the context. The second category includes groups or professionals, like politicians, economists, journalists, policy planners etc. who seek social improvement and social change but do not work with the individuals, families, and groups to connect them with changes. On this ground, the social worker's claim is unique. The social worker works with individuals, groups, communities, and at the policy level in the available social context and constantly seeks to change the social context, which harnesses societal betterment.

There is another essential point of view, which can be called a less extreme viewpoint of constructivism. According to it, construction is a process by which people arrive at a common point and establish it as a norm in particular societies (Payne, 2006). Based on this argument, if we look at the term 'social work' as used and perceived throughout the world, we can find that it is always according to the social needs of the place. For instance, a report published at the Tenth International Conference of Social Work on 'The Term "Social Work" as used throughout the World' by the ISWC committee, portrays a clear picture of social work perceived by various countries. The explanation of social work in the report reflects elements of constructivism. Various countries defined social work as per the context and its requirements. Based on this, the present research explains social work in India from a theoretical perspective of social constructivism.

### **1.1.2 Social Work in India**

India has a long history of social work. If we trace the historical foundation of social work in India, social work seems to comprise two coexisting spheres of work styles. One that considers social work as humanitarian responses by individuals or groups to the perceived problems of the

society. Second, understand it in the context of modernisation and industrialisation. It provides help in a systematic and planned way. Correlating with these work styles, there are two types of social workers: voluntary social workers and professional social workers. It is necessary to understand and define both these categories because it covers a large area and creates some 'confusions' regarding their identity.

### **1.1.3 Professional Social Workers**

Professional social workers are considered as those who get scientific training and skill set to do social work. It means a person with an academic degree (Graduate, Post-graduate and Doctorate) in social work discipline by the recognised institute is known as a professional social worker. However, the group of professional social workers in India is tiny because it originated in the 20th century.

According to M. S. Gore, "... Professional social workers do so not only in the sense that the person designated earns his/her living by doing what was traditionally regarded as social work but in the sense that he has an area of special contribution-a contribution which is different from that of other professionals and which he is able to make because of his special preparation for the task (Gore, 1965)." These are the people who possess specific knowledge and set of skills to fulfil societal needs. They emphasise the rational and scientific approach to solving social problems according to society. Professional social workers have their association and a code of conduct. It has its pre-defined set of values and ethics, which has to be followed by every member.

The professional social workers are masters in the various techniques and methods of social work. Gore (1965), noted that professional social workers are humble men, who have certain equipment like a body of knowledge and skills to handle problems of institutional management and interpersonal and inter-group relations, unlike the heroic nature of reformers and voluntary social workers. He mentioned the contemporary weakness of professional social workers, which lies in a lack of enthusiasm and emotional conviction. Therefore, they can only do those works efficiently, which a community finds to be done. They cannot change the community's existing value and make them able to accept a whole new idea. Hence, unlike voluntary workers, they cannot initiate and manage any movement.



On this ground, the researcher wants to argue that professional social workers' aforementioned approach cannot meet contemporary demands and current promises made by the social work profession itself. In 2012, Nadkarni and Desai mentioned in their report that "the profession has resolved that as professional social workers and representatives of social work educational institutions, we are together in solidarity for social justice and equality in favour of the poor and the marginalised section of the society. (Nadkarni and Desai, 2012)" In the recent global definition of social work in 2014, the profession also mentioned its inclination to human rights and social justice. It reaffirmed its commitment to meet the emerging challenges of the neoliberal world. To fulfil these promises, professional social workers need to require certain features like commitment, motivation, along with knowledge and skills. An attitude of fulfilling job requirements like an ordinary job can not address contemporary social problems. However, they are not expected to play a heroic role like 'martyrs' or 'sacrificing' or 'hurting themselves to help others'. It demands commitment. With knowledge, skills and value - ethics as three pillars of the social work profession, few scholars consider commitment is the fourth pillar of the profession.

The gradual development of the profession in India leads to increased participation of professional social workers in developmental fields, though there is still a long way to cover. In the current scenario, professional social workers are engaged in various areas like community development, working with issue-based groups like child rights, women's right, LGBT etc. and have contributed remarkably in the medical and correctional field as well. The best part of professional social workers is that they have a sense of social purpose and capacity to work methodically. Though, the group of professional social workers is still young and gradually emerging in the country. Because the social work profession is in a developing stage and the idea of professional training keeps moulding itself according to the needs of the current society.

#### **1.1.4 Voluntary Social Workers**

In a layperson's understanding, voluntary social workers work voluntarily on their own will, out of natural feelings of compassion, concern for others' wellbeing, have a sense of responsibilities and working without expecting any kind of tangible material gains against the services they deliver. From the academic perspective, it can be defined as people who neither get scientific training nor get any academic credentials in the social work discipline; even though they are

serving humanity. The term 'voluntary action' is defined by scholars from different perspectives. Often, professionally trained workers engaged in voluntary organisations are also termed as 'voluntary' though he/she is professionally trained.

Sometimes, the term 'voluntary' conveys 'non-economic' activity, i.e. doing any action by will and without getting remuneration. Voluntary services are considered synonymous with honorary or unpaid services. It is also used to denote 'Non-Government' context. In the present time, the term 'voluntary' is applied for organised social work activities, paid or unpaid and which is free from the state's control, like non-government organisations, voluntary organisations etcetera. The multiple meanings of the term voluntary create 'confusion'.

In the present age, voluntary social work activities can be defined as direct or indirect help or services provided by people individually or in the group. They deliver services by their will, desire and a sense of responsibility towards others, especially the disadvantaged section of the society. In this concept, 'confusion' creates when the notion of the 'remuneration against services' gets attached to it. Voluntary services are predominantly considered as synonymous to the 'free services' (in monetary terms). This notion makes voluntary activities insignificant as well as restricts its scope. For this reason, the current explanation of 'voluntary work' should be reframed to include all material expectations and 'need' of the people, who are providing voluntary services for the wellbeing of others, such as the travelling allowance, daily allowance and modest honorarium to make them able to meet their needs. Inclusion of this criterion in defining the voluntary sector will widen horizons of the sector.

The existence of voluntary social work in India has been evident since many centuries. It has shifted from charity to philanthropy to an organised form of social services. Initially, religion was the inspiration behind such activities. Afterwards, rationalistic principles came into existence. Further, the industrialisation and westernisation resulted in an organised form of social services in the form of a voluntary organisation. Up to the time, the most prevalent notion about voluntary social work was the relief of distress or helping the handicapped, through individual or group efforts. Charity, philanthropy and a spiritual urge to help one's fellow beings in distress were considered valuable assets of voluntary social workers. Today, this sector has covered a vast landscape. Billimoria G. R (1961) noted that the concept of voluntary action has broadened

and voluntary social work is undergoing far-reaching changes in response to the needs of changing society.

It is evident in the contemporary social work practices that voluntary social workers work for the awareness of various issues among people, educating them about their social responsibilities, which leads to empowerment. Many voluntary workers have also been engaged in the work to ensure human rights, social justice, and adopted social action to achieve desired goals.

Voluntary social workers have humanitarian or sometimes spiritual approaches in their work. They possess a spirit of humanity and a sense of social responsibility. In words of Billimoria G.R. (1961), “social service becomes part and parcel of his daily life so that his/her conscious or unconscious actions are all aimed at making the world a better place to live in.” This characteristic makes a difference in their practices.

Voluntary social workers possess some peculiarities. Devi Prasad (2014) mentioned a few major strengths of this category, a) Diversity of area covered by voluntary, i.e. from relief and rehabilitation to development and advocacy. b) Sector-specific expertise they brought to their area of work. c) Its innovative role, experiments and promotes new areas of development. d) Connection to people and its ability to take on movement in the society by giving voice to the voiceless and marginalised. These characteristics help voluntary social workers to get community confidence and community recognition.

Voluntary efforts have been changed according to changes in social structure and need of the society. Coexistence of professional and voluntary social workers in the developmental sector raises certain questions related to identity and working style. B. Devi Prasad in 2014 mentioned that “... the voluntary sector is one of the major recruiters of professional social workers, the sector’s growing visibility and importance is a challenge to the profession indirectly. Though both of them work for a common goal, i.e. social development, there were occasions where one thought the other is less professional or not committed enough to realise the goal.” (Devi Prasad, 2014)

Voluntary social workers have an enormous contribution to social development. We can not deny the existence of 'voluntary actors' as 'social workers', i.e. 'Voluntary Social Workers'. This

category of social workers are not academically trained despite that they are working for the society. They have their outlook and style of practices. According to the researcher, it is essential to understand voluntary social workers' practices to understand social work practices in India.

This research made a distinction between 'trained' and 'voluntary' based on their training. Both the categories of social worker have their way of practice. They both are working for the society, engaging in various social work activities at the individual, group, community and society level at large for the same goal of social development. They have a different outlook, perception, attitude in virtue of their training, which influences their practices.

In order to understand the *professional practices* of social workers, we first need to define the term *professional practice*. Thus, the following part discusses social work as a profession and derives components of professional practices of social workers.

#### **1.1.5 Social Work as a Profession**

Abraham Flexner (1915) was the first to address the professional status of social work. He proposed six attributes of the profession to decide the status of social work as a profession which were as following:

1. Professional activity is based on intellectual action, along with personal responsibility.
2. The practice of a profession is based on knowledge, not routine activities.
3. Practical application of the theory.
4. Techniques to be taught and develop skill sets.
5. A profession is organised internally.
6. A profession is motivated by altruism, with members working in some sense for the good of society.

Based on these criteria, Flexner concluded that social work could hardly fit in the criteria of the profession, unlike medicine and engineering. However, he appreciated the professional spirit of social work. After four decades, Greenwood (1957) claimed that social work is a profession because it satisfied five primary attributes, which are as following:

1. Systematic theory.
2. Authority or control over the nature and extent of services providing to the clients.

3. Community sanction: a profession gets community sanction if it fulfils two requirements, a) minimum criteria of entry into the profession, like completion of particular education and training program and b) professional licencing.
4. Ethical codes, which should be enforced by professional associations
5. Culture: It includes, a) Social value: The service that a professional render to society is so important that regulation is needed to prevent unqualified persons from performing such service. b) Norms: Professionals have proper ways to behave so as to involve in their work personally. c) Symbols: Insignia, emblem, folklore, buzzwords, distinctions, titles and awards.

Nevertheless, few scholars did not agree with Greenwood's views. Etzioni (1972), found that social work was a semi-profession like nursing and teaching, which are shorter, less legitimate, less autonomy and lack a specialised body of knowledge than the profession. By the end of the 20th century, social work gained wide recognition as a profession in the west.

In India, the social work profession does not enjoy the status of the profession fully yet, because it cannot fulfil all criteria given by Flexner or Greenwood, like western society (Nair, 2014). It has covered a long path to achieving those criteria, but still in the phase of 'semi-profession' in the country.

The journey of professionalisation of social work in India has lagged in some requirements like professional association (which is progressing now), authority control, which keeps check on entry and exists in the profession and licencing system. However, this journey has made significant development in establishing a knowledge base and inculcating skillsets for social work practice. It has developed a code of conducts, required skill sets to practise social work in India. Even various stakeholders of the social work profession are engaged in creating an indigenous base of the social work profession in India.

To understand the nature of social work practice in India, we need to study contemporary practices by social workers in India. Therefore, this work explores and understands the professional practices of social workers in India. There are professional practices derived for social workers, which enhance their service delivery system. The question arises: what are professional practices? What are its components?

### 1.1.6 Professional Practices of Social Work

**Professional Practice** - At the outset, It is necessary first to define 'professional practice'. It consists of two terms: the term 'professional', which is pertaining to the profession; The second term 'practice' denotes habitual or expected procedure or way of doing something.

Green B in 2009 defined professional practices as -

*"There are at least four senses in which the term "professional practice" might be understood and operationalised here. First, it can be taken as referring to practising a profession, as in the familiar expression "practising medicine" or "practising law". Hence one might similarly refer to "practising education" or (perhaps better) "practising teaching", or "practising nursing" etc. Second, it could refer to practising professionalism—that is, one enacts professionalism, one practices what it is to be professional or to be a professional. Here, professionalism is itself to be understood as a practice phenomenon, a matter; therefore, of practice and identity. Third, it can be understood as referring to, or evoking, a moral-ethical quality: a distinctive quality of being in the world, an attitude or disposition towards the objects of one's practice, whether they be persons or not. It is in this sense that one can speak of an organic relationship between practice and ethics—the ethics of practice and the practice of ethics. Finally, a practice might be described as "professional"—in contrast to what might be seen as the sphere of the "amateur"—analogously to what happens in sport and other areas (e.g., dancing), where one is paid a fee for the service that one provides and enacts, often on an explicit, formally constructed scale."* (Green B, 2009)

In the case of this research, all these senses are relevant to differing degrees. However, the sense of 'practising professionalism' in terms of qualities and professionalism in terms of moral-ethical qualities construct 'professional practices' of social workers in India. Because of the existence of 'amateur' or voluntary workers along with 'professionals'. However, practitioners of both the categories require ideal ethe to be instilled in their members in terms of an appropriate (professional) attitude regarding conduct, relationships, and excellence in knowledge and skills to fulfil the clients' demands, these ethe can be called 'professional practice'. In this study,

Based on this, professional practices of social workers comprises certain components, which are as follows-

- Knowledge
- Skills
- Value & Ethics
- Commitment
- Motivation
- Practice

These values are laid for professional social workers. However, we are studying it in voluntary social workers as well. This research work explores the aforementioned components of professional practices of professionally trained and voluntary social workers and understands its influences on the practices of practitioners.

## **1.2 Rationale of the Study**

### ***1.2.1 Interpretation of components contemporary social work practice and advancing knowledge base of the profession***

Theory versus practice is a subject of debate since long in social science. Although, social work discipline is characterised by the mutual co-existence of theory and practice. It means theory entails practice and practice contributes to theory. Thus, social work scholars need to undertake research on knowledge-based social work practices, and various social work interventions carried out on the field.

Besides this, the contemporary era is marked with the speedy transformation of the socio-political-economic field. We live in a fast-paced world, where we can trace rapid changes in people's problems and needs. Hence, situations encountered by social work practitioners in the field are very dynamic and most complex. Practitioner incorporates intervention based on his/her prior knowledge as well as experience and generates novel approaches and techniques. The knowledge generated by practitioners based on experiences can add-on to the more extensive

theoretical knowledge base generated by various scholars and social scientists. Therefore, this research work studies social work practices by trained and voluntary practitioners in the field.

In 2012 a report presented in NASW by Nadkarni and Desai criticised practitioners' inability to document the practices. This research will record the process and evidence of social work practices by practitioners. Its documentation will help social work academia in the indigenisation process of social work discipline.

### ***1.2.2 Creating a space for the identity of the voluntary sector in the academia***

Voluntary social work sector is an important instrument to bring social change and develop humane and just society. The community recognises voluntary social workers, but it has a tiny space in the world of academia. The practices of voluntary social workers and their contribution are rarely acknowledged in academic literature, especially social work.

Social work literature considers activities by the voluntary sector as 'social services'. This label to the voluntary sector may not be relevant in the contemporary era, because it covers a broader canvas of the field ranging from social services to social justice. However, the label of 'social service' to voluntary work resulted in an identity crisis for voluntary workers in the academic sector.

As it is evident that practices of voluntary workers and their contribution made an occasional appearance in social work research. In the absence of research in this sector, it remains a thrust area in this rapidly changing era. This research work recognised the contribution of the voluntary sector in the developmental sector and aimed to mark out the transformation of practices of voluntary workers. It will provide a space for the narratives of voluntary workers in the academic and theory-building process.

### ***1.2.3 Comparing practices of professionally trained and voluntary social workers***

In India, two streams of social workers exist together. Gore (1965) noted that both “..... professional and voluntary social workers have something specific to contribute to social work. If the professional can bring training and the skill of a specialist, without which the intricate problems of modern society cannot be tackled, the volunteer brings to social work the interest



and confidence of the community... Immediate and concerted action is required on the part of both (Gore, 1965 reprinted in 2015).” These categories of social workers possess their peculiarities and style of working. Therefore, this research work explores the practices of social workers in both categories.

Professional social workers undergo academic training of two years in post-graduation (three years in case of graduation). After that, they begin practices on the field like the other professions such as medicine, engineering etcetera. However, voluntary workers do not possess any kind of academic training in social work, but they may have their training or have developed their practices through experiences. This research work has collected narratives of professional and voluntary social workers to understand their practices.

In addition to this, present research work portrayed a comparative image of the practices of trained and voluntary social workers, which paints peculiar features of both the categories of social workers.

#### ***1.2.4 A passionate argument for pedagogical innovation in social work education and training based on contemporary practices of social work practitioners.***

Narratives of fieldwork practitioners play a vital role in the pedagogical innovations in social work. Field experiences of the practitioners and their comparing image have reflected peculiarities of both the categories of social workers. Therefore, based on data, this research will suggest a training model for social work, which will be a blend of both these categories and make social work practices more reliable and efficient in the Indian setting.

It has presented an argument for innovation in contemporary social work education and training to inculcate essential features to undertake social work activities in the Indian setting, which will blend features of both the categories of social workers.

## **1.3 Research Questions and Research Objectives**

### **a) Research Questions**

The key questions, which this study has addressed in the course of its enquiry, were:

- 1) What are the lived experiences of trained and voluntary social workers engaged in the development sector?
- 2) What do these stories reveal about the components (knowledge, skills, value-ethics, commitment and motivation) of professional practices amongst trained and voluntary social workers?

### **b) Research Objectives**

Drawing from the research questions, the following objectives were outlined for the study.

- 1) To present a detailed descriptive record of knowledge and skills possessed by trained and voluntary social workers in Gujarat.
- 2) To examine values and ethics practised by trained and voluntary social workers.
- 3) To explore the motivation level and factors affecting the motivation of both the categories of social workers.
- 4) To explore the commitment of trained and voluntary social workers.
- 5) Critically examine the influence of these components on practices of social workers through narrative analysis.

## **1.4 Explanations of the Terms used in the enquiry**

In this research, some terms need to be defined in the context of this study, which are as follows-

### **a)Professional Practices-**

The professional practices of a profession are a design or structure that provides guidelines on recruitment, conduct, and attitude to be followed by the members who are practising the profession. It includes what should an individual do, how should they think, perceive and act, what should they possess in terms of knowledge and skills etc. for efficient practice.

## **b) Professional Social Workers-**

Professional social workers are considered those who have obtained scientific training and possess the skill set to practice. It means that a person with academic credentials (Graduate, Postgraduate and Doctorate) in social work discipline by recognised institutes can be considered professional social workers.

In this research study, professional social workers are those who are having a postgraduate or doctorate (i.e. M.A in Social Work or MSW and PhD in Social Work) and working in the development sector.

## **c) Voluntary Social Workers**

In this research study, 'voluntary' social workers are those people who are working in the developmental field, though they do not have any academic qualifications in social work. There are certain matrixes considered for the voluntary social workers in this study, which are as follows-

- Time- One who is working on a full-time basis. It means a person who does social work full time, with no other business.
- Remuneration–Person may or may not take remuneration for his/her work. Hence, in this research study, remuneration is not a criterion to differentiate between professional and voluntary social workers.
- Training- Person, who does not have any academic qualification of social work discipline. It may be possible that he/she may have informal training. So, this study will solely differentiate professional and voluntary social workers based on their training only.
- Nature of work–Person, who has been engaged in service to others; participation or civic engagement; and advocacy or campaigning for a particular cause. This study will not consider charity or 'almsgiving' activities as social work.

## **2. Research Methodology**

### **2.1 Philosophical Worldviews**

**The world views adopted for this research, i.e. the epistemological and ontological paradigms**

#### **(a) Ontological Belief of this research**

This research cannot assume one absolute truth that needs to be discovered. The practices of social workers can create different truths or different levels of truth with relation to intrinsic components of professional social work practices, to presume that we could find an absolute truth is just naivety. The truth will be created as participants interpret social work practices according to the need of a particular society. Thus the ontological belief of this research is:

**“Reality is subjective as seen and experienced by participants in the study”.**

#### **(b) Epistemological Belief of this research**

Epistemological belief answers the question of what makes up valid knowledge, and how can we get it? If we understand the philosophical paradigm, then the epistemological belief of this research is already explained by the ontological belief of this research. Epistemology would help us explain how we came to know what we know and how we theorise (Crotty, 1998). The Epistemological Belief in this research is:

**“Knowledge is primarily created during the interaction between the researcher and participants.”**

### **2.2 Method Adopted for the Research Enquiry**

Based on the philosophical worldview adopted for the present research, the researcher chose **qualitative research as a strategy or design of the research**, to understand the social phenomenon, nature of practices of social workers and intrinsic components of professional practices.

The methodological approach followed in this work is Narrative Research. 'Narrative' as a method can be used in a study in multiple ways, such as collecting narrative of a phenomenon. It is also used as a procedure for analysing stories.

As a method, it begins with the experiences as expressed in lived and told stories of individuals and relies on spoken and written words of participants. It reports an individual's experiences and discusses the meaning of those experiences for an individual. In addition to this, it emphasises the 'context' of the story. Clandinin (2013) makes a case for the need for attending to the context in which the narrative is embedded, advising, "the focus of the narrative inquiry is not only valorising individual's experience but is also an exploration of the social, cultural, familial, linguistic, and institutional narratives within which individuals experiences were, and are constituted, shaped, expressed and enacted" (Clandinin, 2013).

Within the methodology of narrative inquiry, particular methods are employed for data collection. Clandinin and Caine in 2008 mentioned that there are two starting points for narrative inquiry: listening to individuals tell their stories and living alongside participants as they live their stories. Thus, along with interviews as primary method observation, pictures, discussions, and reports can be used for data collection in the narrative inquiry.

Narrative inquiry opens a gateway for probing and collecting experiences and choices made in the personal, social and professional life of an individual. It seeks reasoning from the subject (research participant) to justify his/her choices. Sarbin (1986) stated that "... the narrative is an achievement that brings together mundane facts and fantastic creations; time and place are incorporated. The narrative allows for the inclusion of actor's reasons for their acts as well as the causes of the happenings." (Sarbin, 1986) It is considered that narrative inquiry unfolds a holistic account of human action as to how he thinks, perceives and makes moral choices. These nuances of the narrative inquiry allowed the researcher to explore and develop insight into components of professional practices of the social worker. Narratives of the participants revealed components of professional practices in participant's actions and choices they made in the various circumstances of their lives.

## **2.3 Data: Sources, Collection and Analysis**

### **2.3.1 Sampling process**

Qualitative research is characterised by lack of pre-determined samples. It does not focus on counting and reaching a certain number, nor does it have a target to reach probable representativeness of sample units. It goes on until the research data reaches the saturation stage, where researchers do not find newer data. Based on this understanding, the researcher derived the sampling process of present research work as follows-

#### **2.3.1.1 Universe or population**

All voluntary social workers and trained social workers working in the developmental field in the state of Gujarat constituted the universe of this study.

#### **2.3.1.2 Sampling**

As the researcher has not constructed a sample frame, hence the researcher opted for non-probability sampling. It does not employ randomness in the selection of the sample. Under non-probability sampling, research participants are chosen by a **purposive criterion sampling method**.

- **Purposive Criterion sampling –**

It is a type of non-probability sampling, selected on the basis of objectives of study and characteristics of the population. In this method, the researcher selects the sample with a purpose in mind. Along with purpose, it seeks samples that meet some predetermined criteria.

For the present research work, the researcher has identified certain criteria for selecting social work practitioners. Fulfilment of the criteria by social work practitioners decided eligibility for their participation in this research study. Criteria of the selection are as follows-

<b>Professional Social Workers</b>	<b>Voluntary Social Workers</b>
S/he has an academic degree of social work, i.e. MSW, MA in Social Work or Doctorate in Social Work.	S/he does not possess an academic degree in social work, but may or may not have an academic degree in other disciplines.
Working in Developmental field, which includes community development, health, education, livelihood generation or any issue or group-specific work	Working in Developmental field, which includes community development, health, education, livelihood generation or any issue or group-specific work
S/he should be engaged in full-time social work activities.	S/he should be engaged in full-time social work activities.
S/he should be founder/director/Managing trustee or decision making authority in the organisation.	S/he should be founder/director/Managing trustee or decision making authority in the organisation.
S/he should possess a minimum of three years of field experiences.	S/he should possess a minimum of three years of field experiences.

Based on the above criteria, the researcher seeks the research participants who are ‘institutional-builders’ or ‘institution-managers’.

- **Sample Size**

In qualitative research, a saturation point in the data determines the sample size. It also considers the representation of the total population. Based on this, the researcher has selected 14 research participants for the research enquiry, which includes seven participants of each category, i.e. professional social workers and voluntary social workers.

## 2.3.2 Source and Process of Data Collection

### 2.3.2.1 Geographical Mark-out

This study is delimited to the geographical region of the Gujarat state. Further, the footprints of social work practitioners have been found in the entire state. The researcher observed that the accumulation of social work activities varies in various regions of the state, based on the characteristics of local communities and local social problems. There are more social work activities and organisations in the south Gujarat pocket, which is marked as a tribal belt.



Based on this social work, practitioners in Gujarat are clustered into four pockets: South Gujarat, Central Gujarat, Saurashtra - Kutch and North Gujarat. The researcher chose research participants from all the four pockets for the narrative collections. South Gujarat and North



Gujarat are marked as a tribal belt, hence there is a high accumulation of social organisations and social work practitioners. While Saurashtra and Kutch region has less number of social organisations and activities as compared to other pockets. However, climatic conditions, cultural factors and conflict zones because of international borders are such issues, which has invited significant social activities and intervention in the Kutch region. The fourth pocket is Central Gujarat, which has better socio-economic conditions as compared to other regions. This region is mainly urban community-based. Therefore the researcher has found urban-based social work practitioners from this region.

#### **2.3.2.2 Approaching Research Participants and Developing Familiarity**

Research participants have been selected on the basis of the above criteria. Initially, the researcher approached participants by telephone and email asking for an appointment for the meeting. In the meetings with each participant, the researcher explained the entire concept and process of data collection and took their consent to participate in this research. After 2-3 meetings, the researcher went to live with participants at the project site (where s/he is working).

During the staying period with each participant, the researcher often engaged herself with rapport building and getting familiar with the environment. This process was essential for her as well as participants in narrative research. The researcher started with conversations or ‘conversation as an interview’ to collect the information. In addition to this, the researcher employed formal interviews, observation and living alongside participants as a shadow for the data collection. In this enquiry, she also made shadow practice with research participants, to collect narratives of the participant's life. The shadow practice involves shadowing the movements of practitioners without the involvement in any action.

#### **2.3.2.3 Enquirer's Routine on Field**

Researcher formally started fieldwork in January 2019. She started with developing familiarity with participants. Thus, during the initial two or three meetings, she engaged in formal words with participants on call, meetings and through emails. During the stay with each participant, her routine of the field is from morning till going to bed at night. The days with participants on the field were mostly used to informally talk, visit, walk in the community, and work with

participants. It also includes conversations with family members and co-workers of the participants. Most of the formal interviews recorded in planned manners happened during the participant's break time, tea time, dining time or late in the evening. Formal interviews of the participants were mostly done over more than one sitting, but sometimes it happened in a single stretch.

Besides this, memoing based on the researcher's continuous lived experiences formed a part of the routine. During shadow practice with participants, it was almost like living with 'researcher-antenna' to look out for details. Tea table and dining table discussions, conversations with family members, co-workers and community members, sitting in the office, walking with participants and almost all the activities became research time for the researcher on-field. Narratives collected through living life with participants play a significant role to develop reflexivity of the researcher.

#### **2.3.2.4 Tools for Data Collection: Real Life Methods**

The primary tool of the data collection in this enquiry was an interview schedule and observation schedule. For the interaction, the researcher chose multiple methods according to the circumstances of the field and participants. Therefore, the multiple methods were adopted for data collection in the study. These may be clubbed together into an umbrella term- Real Life Methods- such as observations, walking, walking interviews, family interviews, individual interviews and living along with participants & working together.

#### **2.3.3 Data Treatment and Analysis**

Initially, collected data was transformed from audio and audio-visual to text through transcription in the original language, followed by translating the data into the English language.

ATLAS.ti is the CAQDAS (computer-aided qualitative data analysis software) program used for qualitative data analysis by the researcher to assist in coding and derivation of themes from the interview data, followed by a thematic analysis of the data.

### **2.3.3.1 Recording**

The narratives of the participants were collected using the aforementioned real-life methods. These narratives have been analysed for determining coherent patterns. It is followed by thematic analysis and interpretation. It formulated a comprehensive 'story' of social workers' practices, which 'painted' various components of professional practices, through the accounts of the narratives of the life being communicated between researcher, participants, spaces and lived experiences of the researcher.

## **2.4 Chapterisation**

Characterisation plan of the research work is as follows-

- 1) Introduction
- 2) Review of Literature
- 3) Methodology: An Account of Narrative Enquiry
- 4) Data Analysis and Interpretation
- 5) Findings, Conclusions and Suggestions

### **3. Major Findings**

#### **3.1 Demographic Profile of the Research Participants**

This qualitative study is based on narrative interviews and field observations of 14 social workers (seven professional social workers and seven voluntary social workers) from Gujarat. Demographic profile of the participant is as follows-

Regional distribution - Out of 14 research participants, four are from South Gujarat, three participants are from North Gujarat, three participants are from Central Gujarat, and four participants belong to Saurashtra - Kutch. However, the regions are not mutually exclusive, because field areas covered by few participants overlap to more than one region. Gender distribution of the sample is: five are female, and nine are male social workers.

All the 14 participants are either founders or directors of the institution, who are well aware of their ideology, vision and mission. They have decision-making power and responsibilities of the organisation. In a nutshell, these are the 'institutional-builders'. Thus, these participants' experiences and 'stories' explored and added insight into the research question posed in this study.

#### **3.2 Research Findings**

Four distinct themes have emerged from the research data:

- 1) Knowledge and skills in social work
- 2) Value-ethics in social work practice
- 3) Commitment and Motivation at Work: Reflection in Social Worker's Narratives

##### **1. Knowledge and Skills in Social Work**

Social work practice is a skilled activity and requires an extensive knowledge base and considerable intellectual abilities. This chapter discusses knowledge and skill framework possessed by professional and voluntary social workers.

To classify and present a record of knowledge used by professionals and voluntary social workers in the intervention, the researcher traced a pattern, which primarily consists of theoretical knowledge, information and action knowledge. This classification is closely related to the knowledge-skill framework presented by Trevithick P. (2011), which mentioned three knowledge domains in social work practice namely, (i) Theoretical knowledge domain, (ii) Factual knowledge domain, and (iii) Practice knowledge domain.

### *Theoretical Knowledge Domain*

The research's significant findings reveal that professional social workers possessed theoretical knowledge, which includes knowledge about various adapted theories from social science disciplines, practice theories, and approaches. However, this domain in professional social workers is greatly influenced by the ideological base. For instance, professional participants who belong to the Gandhian school of thought during their professional training possessed knowledge regarding Gandhian approaches and intervention techniques. They hold minimal knowledge about other practice approaches and theories.

In the case of voluntary social workers, very few workers possess theoretical knowledge. As per the narrations of voluntary workers and field observations, it is evident in the data that voluntary social workers, who either have higher educational qualifications or groomed by superiors (who possess higher educational qualifications) hold theoretical knowledge. It is limited to *borrowed theories*, which mean knowledge regarding theories of the various social science disciplines.

### *Factual Knowledge Domain*

Factual knowledge looks at five key areas, which demands more up-to-date information for effective social work practice. These areas are legislations, policies and programs, agency policy and system, problems and people.

It is evident in the data that professional social workers hold this knowledge. They acquired this knowledge domain through professional training, especially regarding legislation, policies and programs. In addition to this, professional participants also have knowledge and understanding regarding agency, people and problems. In acquiring knowledge regarding a particular group of

people and the problem of a place, professional participants' research-based practice made a significant contribution.

The research-based practice is not evident in the voluntary worker's practices, though few exceptions exist. An emerging trend in this regard is hiring 'trained, and fresher' social workers for research and documentation work by voluntary social workers is observed. So, voluntary workers are gradually moving towards a research-based practice approach.

The second point is that voluntary social workers acquired the necessary factual knowledge base for intervention with 'personal experiences' over time.

### *Practice Knowledge Domain*

According to Trevithick (2011), practice knowledge domain can be looked at in three overlapping themes: knowledge acquisition, knowledge use and knowledge creation. One of the integral parts of this domain is the use of personal knowledge, i.e. use of self, intuition and *tacit* knowledge. It is also known as knowledge-in-action, practical knowledge and action knowledge.

In the case of professional social workers, it was observed that they acquired a knowledge base through their professional training. However, it was found that professionals use a factual knowledge base in interventions, but to draw a plan for intervention and decision-making, most professional participants tended to rely on 'personal experiences' rather than a theoretical knowledge base.

Social work practitioners are not merely 'knowledge users'. They create knowledge by their *practice wisdom*. In the case of both the categories, the participants' knowledge creation potential is underused due to work pressures, funding and resource management struggle, and limitation in articulation in precise language. This research suggests a prospectus of identification of social work practices as a research site.

### *Sources of Knowledge*

For the professional social workers, a primary source of knowledge is *professional training*, along with this, it also uses *personal experiences*. In comparison, voluntary practitioners rely on *personal experiences* only. Within the realm of *experiences* falls in two parts: personal or 'craft'

knowledge and *Tacit* knowledge. It is evident in the data that in most cases ‘craft’ knowledge is underlying in the significant decisions and processes adopted by trained and voluntary social workers both for the intervention and service delivery. Nevertheless, few narrations of the participants of both categories reflect *Tacit* knowledge as well. It reflects mostly in the cases of participants who possess *self-knowledge*.

The following table 3.1 summarise significant findings on knowledge of social work practitioners:

Categories	Knowledge Domain	Source of Knowledge
Professional Social Workers	Theoretical	Professional Training base
	Factual	Personal Experiences
	Practical	Tacit knowledge (in very few cases)
Voluntary Social Workers	Factual (Acquired gradually)	Personal Experiences
	Practical	Tacit Knowledge (in few cases)

### ***Skills in Social Work Intervention***

In a way, the knowledge and skills framework in social work are intertwined. Because, the intervention consists of knowledge, skills and values. Therefore, skill is a vital factor in professional competency. This part is partially overlapped with a discussion on knowledge use in the previous section.

Social work profession encountered the multifaceted nature of the problems, complex processes and broader context, which covers individuals, families, groups, organisations and communities. It requires considerable skills as well for competent practices. This research has identified the skillset of social workers in the context of *functions* and *practice-context* as well.

In the *practice-context* realm, this research adopted QAA (2008) framework, which categorised social work skills into three-level: (i) Micro (inter and interpersonal level) level skills, (ii)

Mezzo(organisational and community) level skills, and (iii) Macro(Societal) level skills. The research found that professional social workers have skillsets at all three levels. While most voluntary social workers possess micro and mezzo level skillsets, as they help an individual and solve the problems they encounter. These categories have strong relations with the community and understand organisational policies and deliver services in the arena of organisation and service users. At this level, they bring people together, using mediating and organising skills. Macro-level skillsets, which involve understanding and considering broader socio-political, economic and environmental forces, contribute to the human conditions, policy-level intervention, which provides opportunities for the beneficiaries' wellbeing. Voluntary social workers, who are having higher educational qualifications, hold macro-level intervention skillsets.

Based on the *functions* of social workers, this research has categorised skillsets into five categories: (i) Cognitive skills, (ii) Interpersonal skills, (iii) Administrative skills, (iv) Decision-making skills, and (v) Resource management skills. The following table 3.2 provides a brief record of the skillset status among both the categories of social work practitioners:

Categories	Explanation	Categories of Social Workers
Cognitive Skills	It refers to developing analytical skills, capacity to evaluate, undertake research and effective use of research findings, application of theoretical knowledge.	Professional Social workers develop this skillset from professional training.
		It lacks in voluntary social workers.
Interpersonal Skills	Key elements in interpersonal relationships include an understanding of self, working relationships with service users, authority and colleagues in the agency, working with differences, partnership and collaboration relations and communication.	Professional social workers possess this skillset. Professional training, personal experiences and practice wisdom contribute to the development of these skills amongst professional social workers.
		Voluntary social workers gradually develop this skillset with experiences. However, it is observed that there is a



		<i>bottom-to-top</i> approach in the interpersonal skills developed by voluntary social workers. It is effective in those who are having higher educational qualifications or groomed by visionary leaders.
Administrative skills	It refers to the formal and written communication, record keeping and reports writing, allocation of the responsibilities, planning, monitoring and client/service user-friendly mechanism, accountability and transparency in the agency.	Professional social workers have expertise in this work.
		It lacks in voluntary social workers. However, a trend is observed that voluntary hire professionally trained for administrative work, especially documentation and research as well.
Decision-making skills	Coulshed (1991) places six categories which underlie any decision-making process: theoretical knowledge, economic, aesthetic(personal preference), social, political(account of power balance), ethical (what is right).	Professional social workers decision-making skill lies in all the six categories given by Coulshed(1991).
		The voluntary worker's decision-making process is primarily based on economic factors, aesthetic values, social and ethical values. Few voluntary workers also consider political (adopting a democratic decision-making process).
Resource management skills	It involves knowledge of available resources in terms of fundings, consultations, referrals etc., its optimum and effective utilisation, identification of resource gaps and resource mobilisation.	Professional social workers possess resource management skills. However, it mostly relies on <i>Top-to-bottom</i> sources like CSR fundings, Government project fundings.
		Voluntary social workers have optimum skills in community resource mobilisations, including funding, material resources and referrals as well. It is

		mainly due to the community confidence they possess.
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## 2. Values and Ethics in Social Work

In the professional discourse, values and ethics are two different yet related terms. According to Barsky (2010), values refer to the ideals that individuals, groups, organisations or communities aspire. Whereas, ethics refers to the rules that define what types of behaviour are appropriate and not appropriate.

All human efforts, activities, affairs are guided by either neat or loose form of 'value system'. Values become more manifested, visible when practical judgements are made while performing any task on hand either by an individual or institution. In this research, participants found value is a very significant factor in the practice. A participant stated that *"Howsoever knowledgeable or well-skilled a social worker may be, what he really needs to make decisions is a clear 'value system'."*

Social work values define how the social workers view people, its preferred goals for clients and society, and means for achieving those goals (Levy,1993). This research categorised underlying values of social work practitioners into four types: (i) Professional values, (ii) Personal values, (iii) Agency/Organisational values, and (iv) Societal values. These categories are mutually inclusive and may overlap with each other.

### *Professional Values*

The NASW Code of Ethics (1999) identifies six core values for the profession: (i) service, (ii) social justice, (iii) dignity and worth of the person, (iv) importance of human relationships, (v) integrity, and (vi) competence. This list represents a consensus among the NASW members concerning social work's highest moral principles. It was evident in the practices of professional social workers, that they adhere to the professional values with differing degrees. However, commitment to these values is influenced by the personal values of the practitioners.

### *Personal values*

It refers to the things that are important to an individual's life and which guide his/her behaviour. These values are not mandatory to adhere to. It is developed by life experiences, beliefs, and faith.

This research identified certain personal values, which guides social worker's practices. Service i.e high priority to helping others, the importance of human relationships, love, duty-centrism, satisfaction, consistency, compassion are some common personal values identified in the behavioural traits of the voluntary social workers. Few of the social work professions core values are evident in the voluntary workers as well in the form of personal values.

In professional social workers, in addition to the professional values, few common values which are traced in the practices are equality, diversity, scientific inquiry and resilience.

### *Agency/Organisational values*

It describes ideals which an organisation aspires to achieve. It laid the foundation for core ethics or principles of an organisation and guides behaviours, actions and decision-making processes in the entire organisation.

The narratives and field observation reveals that practices of trained, as well as voluntary workers, are greatly influenced by organisational values. It emphasises mainly on the accountability of the practitioner's behaviour to colleagues and service users. However, in the majority of cases, organisational values and personal values become complementary to each other. Because, 'institutional-builders' i.e. the founder or group of founders derived organisational values, which was influenced by their personal values.

### *Societal Values*

It refers to the ideals which provide guidelines for social conduct. Culturally relevant practices of both the categories of social workers reflect their commitment to societal values. Social interdependence, respect, community and responsibilities are some societal values followed by

practitioners. It is found that these practitioners mainly do not follow traditional social values pertaining to gender and hierarchy. Majority professional social workers challenge the traditional societal values, however, their approach to challenge such values sometimes create community tension, conflict and resistance. In comparison to this, few voluntary practitioners made attempts to challenge such societal values in a direct manner. Though, they challenged these in an indirect manner like gradual awareness among people, setting an example of self or few from community etc.

## **Ethics in Social Work**

Ethics are a set of rules for conduct, behaviour, the action of an individual and organisation, based on the value system. For instance, each ethical rule in the Code of Ethics for social workers given by NASW is based on one or more of the values of the social work profession.

The narratives of the participants and field observation divulge three categories of ethics followed in the practices namely: (i) Professional ethics, (ii) Virtue-based ethics, and (iii) Organisational ethics

### *Professional ethics*

It refers to the ethical rules set up by the professional body, expected to be followed by all the members of the profession. In social work, there are codes of conduct and ethical principles of the social work profession, which guides ethical social work practices.

This research found that the majority of the professional social workers follow ethical principles of the practices, like individuality, non-judgemental attitude, controlled involvement of the self, acceptance, self-determination. However, in India status of code of conduct for social workers have certain limitations. First, the absence of a control body and licensing system leads to a weak form of code of conduct for professional social workers in India. Second, various scholars have discussed that social work profession in India has not developed indigenous ethical standards for practices (Reamer and Nimmagadda, 2015; Goswami, 2012), although there are several nascent efforts made like *Declaration of Ethics for Professional Social Workers in India*, by TISS, Code of conducts by NAPSWI. Therefore, in the professional ethical practices guidelines, only principle-based ethics are followed by professional social workers.

### *Virtue-based ethics*

Virtue-based ethics is related to the qualities possessed by an individual. It emphasises the role of virtues in moral philosophy. Virtue ethics focuses on the consequences of the virtues of human life on the actions of human beings.

This research identified these virtue-based ethics in the voluntary social workers, which are care, kindness, compassion, warmth, friendliness, reliability and acceptance etc. It is found that the behaviour of the majority of the voluntary social workers are guided by these virtues. It becomes their moral guidelines for the action.

### *Organisational ethics*

It is a set of principles or ethical rules, which guide decision-making processes, programs and policies and behaviour of the people in the organisation. It is evident in the data that professional and voluntary social workers are committed to organisational ethics. However, their commitment to organisational ethics is also influenced by their role as founder or director in the organisation. This ethical guideline leads to accountable practice in the organisation.

## **3. Commitment and Motivation at Work: Reflections in Social Worker's Narratives**

### **Commitment at work**

Commitment in social work is important because of its association with work performance, values, a desire to 'make a difference' and with stress and work-family conflicts (Landsman 2001; Westbrook, Ellis, and Ellett 2006; Clements, Kinman, and Guppy 2013). It has been described as one of the essential attributes of hardiness and resilience, as very important in work and as a significant component of professional integrity in social work (Meyer and Herscovitch 2001; Banks 2010). Various empirical studies suggest two forms of commitment: (i) Professional commitment, and (ii) Organisational commitment.

### *Professional Commitment*

It refers to one's attitude and behaviour towards one's profession. It includes a commitment to the code of ethical principles, professional values, progressing professional career and identity in the professional community. This research found that professional social workers are having a high commitment to the profession. It is limited to the selected participants of the research study. As the macro-level picture of the commitment of social work professionals to the profession is low. That is the reason behind the limited contribution of social work professionals in the core areas of social work.

### *Organisational commitment*

It is defined as a person's identification with, involvement in and acceptance of goals and values of the organisation. Professional and voluntary social workers both are having high organisational commitment. This commitment is also affected by their role of the founder or director in the organisation.

### *Personal commitment*

Personal commitment to social work arises from family background, socialisation, life experiences, religious beliefs, political views, concern for helping others etc. It is derived out of personal values. Professional commitment is crucial in social work and is also characterised by caring for, and about, others and a desire to help (Landsman 2001; Westbrook, Ellett, and Asberg 2012). Voluntary social workers have a higher personal commitment to social work, as the name of the category itself suggests that they are engaged in these activities out of their personal will.

However, research findings also reveal that in all the social workers, commitment varies over experience, ranging from early years to more experienced to 'veteran' social workers.

### **Motivation at work**

Motivation is a driving force that stimulates an individual to initiate and sustain a particular behaviour. The statement that 'Social work begins with motivation' has proven right for trained and voluntary social workers. However, the factors behind motivation in both categories are different and vary according to the different stages of their working life.

The majority of voluntary social workers exhibit *intrinsic motivation*. It is a motivation, where motives originate from inside. It is an internal driving force. It reflects hedonism pleasure traits like interest, enjoyment, satisfaction, purpose and passion. Nevertheless, few voluntary social workers also reflect extrinsic motives like recognition, respect, and honour.

The professionals mostly exhibit *extrinsic motivation*, where motivation comes from external factors. It includes professional growth, recognition, identifying with organisation, responsibilities, work itself and career advancement. However, it is found that these factors vary and include *intrinsic motives* with work experience.

In addition to this, in the case of social workers, Maslow's theory of the hierarchy of human needs is partially correct. It is seen that these social workers did not pay attention to their needs and devoted themselves to the mission they chose for their lives.