Chapter-I

INTRODUCTION

The concept of social work as a profession started developing in the west almost a century ago. It was a response to need felt at that time. It provided the framework for its development in other countries including India. In west it started with the effort to provide help to poor and needy. In India professional social work came with starting of Sir Dorabaji School of Social Work now known as Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS). To have clear idea about its development in west and in India, it is relevant here to trace its development in both places.

Definition and scope of social work started expanding as practitioners started experiencing. In this chapter an attempt is made to trace evolution of social work practice, social work as profession, definitions, methods and approaches to social work practice and education. Labour Welfare and Industrial Relations as a field of social work unique to Indian situation. An attempt is made to conceptualize industrial social work in Western context and social work practice in business and industry in Indian context.

Evolution of Social Work

Three concerted efforts have been made to arrive at clear definition of social work (Morales & Sheafor) so far. The first effort was made in Milford conference in 1920. Though common and concise definitions of social work was not arrived at, yet the Milford conference encouraged further efforts at articulating a definition of social work.

The second effort was made in 1950s when several specialized social work practice organisations merged into the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). Exercises to arrive at a definition of social work that would reflect the commonality in diverse practice activities started. The result was the

publication of the "working definition of social work practice" in 1958. It could not give a comprehensive definition of social work, but established an important basis for subsequent definitions. It identified three common goals of social work practice (Barlett, 1958):

1. To assist individuals and groups to identify and resolve or minimize problems arising out of disequilibrium between themselves and their environment.
2. To identify potential areas of disequilibrium between individuals or groups and the environment in order to prevent the occurrence of disequilibrium.
3. To seek out, identify and strengthen the maximum potential of individuals, groups and communities.

The third effort was in 1970s and 1980s when NASW published three special editions of its major journal, Social Work. This effort also did not lead to a commonly accepted definition of social work. However, the NASW Board of Directors adopted a definitions of social work that has gained widespread acceptance.

"Social work is the professional activity of helping individuals, groups, or communities to enhance or restore their capacity for social functioning and creating societal conditions favourable to that goal".

Here it is important to note that social work is considered a professional activity. And professional activity requires a particular body of knowledge, values and skills and a discrete purpose that guides one's practice activities.

Social Work as a Profession:

The social work is relatively new as profession compared to other professions. There are seven common criteria of the profession (1) Body of knowledge (2) Theoretical basis (3) University training (4) Income production (5) Professional control of practitioners (6) Internal moral or ethical control of professional activities and (7) Measurable or observable results.

Common body of knowledge:

Social work has to a large degree common body of knowledge which is derived mainly from social science and practice wisdom. It is highly general in nature.

Theory base:

There is no clarity about the theory base as number of social work theories are used, they seem to compete rather than complement each other.

University training:

The university training is available and master of social work degree is provided as a part of university training. The exact professional position of B.S.W. is still under development.

Income production:

Training and education in social work do lead to livelihoods.

Control of Practitioners:

An important requisite for professionals is that the profession as such controls those who practice it. This control is usually achieved through legislative influence. In field of social work there is no complete control of practitioners. Some attempts are going on in this direction.

Internal moral and ethical control:

It is left to profession itself and involves internal or moral and ethical controls with respect to the practice of professional activities. Social workers are constrained by the National Association of Social Workers' code of ethics to keep the client's interests, rather than the professionals interests, at forefront. An implied contract exists between the client, on one hand, and the professional practitioner, on the other. The professional agrees to be competent, to put client's interest first and not to take advantage of the client. A code of ethics was developed in considerable detail by the National Association of Social Workers. Ethical considerations are among the most important guides that a profession has.

Measurable, observable results:

An important criterion for professional status is that the professional perform a task, activity, or service that can in some way be publicly verified,

observed, or seen. All social workers need to define goals for their practice. Social workers at the individual level define goals for their clients and often set benchmark periods for accomplishment. Those who work at organizational, community and policy levels set goals as well their interventions, the goals may be for e.g., changed community conditions, enhanced organizational performance, legislation passed or legislative rules changed etc.

Definitions of Social Work

There are number of definitions of social work. The practitioners have tried to define social work from their own perspectives and approaches to social work. This is clearly evident from the few definitions given below out of numerous definitions on social work.

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

Fink (1942): Social work is the provision of services designed to aid individuals, singly or in groups in coping with present of future social and psychological obstacles that prevent or are likely to prevent, full or effective participation in society.

Anderson (1943): Social work is professional service rendered to people for the purpose of assisting them as individuals or in groups, to attain satisfying relationship and standards of life in accordance with their particular wishes and capacities and in harmony with those of the community.

Clarke (1947): Social work is a form of professional service comprising a composite of knowledge and skills, parts of which are and parts of which are not distinctive of social work, which attempts on the one hand to help the individuals satisfy his needs in the social milieu and on the other to remove as far as

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possible the barriers which obstruct people from achieving the best of which they are capable.

Friedlander (1951): Social work is the process which deals directly and differentially with persons who have problems relating primarily to their social situation and which endeavours, individual to individual to understand what help is needed and to assist the individual to find and utilize the help indicated.

Konopka (1958): Social work is an entity representing three clearly distinguished but inter-related parts: a network of social services, carefully developed methods and process and social policy expressed through social institutions and individuals. All three are based on a view of human being, their interrelationships, and the ethical demand made on them.

Bohem (1959): Social work seeks to enhance the social functioning of the individuals, singly and in groups, by activities focused upon their social relationships which constitute the interaction between man and his environment. These activities can be provision of individual and social resources and prevention of social dysfunction's.

Stroup (1960): Social work is the art of bringing various resources bear on individual, group and community needs by the application of a scientific method of helping people to help themselves.

Pincus and Minahan (1978): Social work is concerned with the interaction between people and their social environment which affect the ability of people to accomplish their life tasks, alleviate distress, and realize their aspirations and values.

Indian Conference of Social Work (1957): Social work is a welfare activity based on humanitarian philosophy, scientific knowledge and technical skills for helping individual or groups or community, to live a rich and full life.

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Khinduka (1962): Social work helps an individual in his social functioning. It is based on certain knowledge foundation, calls for skill in human relationships on the part of its practitioner, and has a set of values furnishing its philosophical base.

Mirza R. Ahmed (1969): Social work is a professional services based on knowledge of human relation and skill in relationships and concerned with problems of interpersonal and or interpersonal adjustments resulting from unmet individual, or community need.

On the basis of these definitions it can be summarized that social work:

i)   Is a professional service which includes specialized knowledge and skills for dealing with human behaviour.

ii)   Its main emphasis is on the analysis and synthesis of human behaviour.

iii) Individual and social problem are solved by applying different methods and techniques.

iv)   Social work gives much emphasis on adjustment.

v)   It's main objective is to make individual self-dependent.

vi)   It not only solve the problems but also prevents its occurring.

vii) It also integrates and co-ordinates means and resources of social development.

viii) It believes in democratic values.

Social Work Perspectives

Johnson has discussed about five perspectives of social work practices. These five perspectives are :

1. Social work as a response to concern/need
2. Social work as a developing profession
3. Social work as a creative blending of knowledge, values, and skills
4. Social work as problem solving process
5. Social work as intervention into human transactions.

1.   Social work as a response to concern/need

According to this perspective social workers respond to concern by identifying any unmet needs in the situation. For that they use knowledge about human development, human diversity and social systems. They identify unmet need of the client and significant individuals and systems in the situation. The focus is on helping individuals to cope with social functioning.

2.   Social work as a developing profession

According to this perspective social work is a fairly new profession. Social work as a young profession has experienced growth related to concerns and changing times as well as related to the process of developing its knowledge, value and skill bases.

3.   Social work as a creative blending of knowledge, values and skills

According to this perspective professional social work has a body of knowledge (ways of understanding), set of values (attitudes toward people) that are operationalized through development of set of skills. This constellation of knowledge, values and skills, is an important perspective of the nature of social work practice. Knowledge is a part of the cognitive or thinking component of practice; values are a part of the feeling or emotional component of practice as well as part of thinking component of some extent. Skills are action or the doing part of social work; they are part of behavioural component.

Application of knowledge, values and skills in each practice situation calls for its creative blending. This creativity is the art of social work.

4.   Social work as problem solving process

Problem solving is a process in which concern and needs are examined; leading to identification of problems and seeking solutions for the same. The knowledge, values and skills are used in understanding the nature of problem

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and in identifying possible solutions. The emphasis in·this perspective more is on thinking or cognitive part of practice.

5.   Social work as intervention into human transactions

It is a contemporary perspective on the nature of practice. Intervention is specific action by a social worker in relation to human systems or processes in order to induce change. It is purposeful and goal directed. Human interaction is transactional in nature; that is, all interactions are affected by other interactions. Social work intervention focuses on these transactions in order to influence for change. Influence brings about change depending on social worker's capacity. This capacity has a base in the worker's knowledge, skills, and reputation, among other factors. This calls for social worker to identify needs and problems in social functioning, to apply knowledge professional values, and skills, including the problem-solving process; and to influence ongoing transactions relative to the needs and problems so as to bring about a change in the transactions.

The perspective presented above are those, which are frequently referred to in social work literature and when taken together, they explain well the nature of contemporary social work practice.

Social Work Practice Approaches

Traditional Practice Method Approach:

Social work to become unique among helping professions developed distinct methods of practice. These methods are social case work, social group work, community organization, social welfare administration and research. Social case work is the first social work method pioneered by Mary Richmond. 'Social Diagnosis' is the first classic book on 'Social Work Practice" written by her. This book filled an important void in social work by introducing a practice literature. The principles of social casework identified by Mary Richmond were later on adopted by social workers and professionals who focussed exclusively on individuals and families. The popularity of Freudian Psychology in 1920s and

1930s also directed social work toward individual practice and as a result many models of social work practice developed focussing on individuals and families.

During 1930 to 1945, Gordon Hamilton conceptualized helping process as "study, diagnosis and treatment", which led to development of "Diagnostic approach" in social work practice. Hamilton's classic formulation greatly influenced the subsequent practice. At the same time another approach to practice was developing, which was different from diagnostic approach. This was known as functional approach.

Some of the most popular and widely practiced models of social case work are presented below:

- **Psychosocial Model** developed by Florence Hollis is an outgrowth of traditional diagnostic case work of 1930's and influenced by work of Gordon Hamilton. It puts emphasis on psychoanalytical theory and ego functioning. It has also used social science concepts of culture, role, communications theory and social systems theory. Study, diagnosis and treatment are the major process included in this model. The goal is adjustment of the individual through change in perception, response, and communication. It can be used with motivated verbal client willing to commit long-term involvement and with a desire for self-knowledge or insight.

- **Functional Model** was developed in 1930s by Jessie Taft and Virginia Robinson. In this model the focus is on release of power for increased social functioning. It can be used in most situations and with individuals, families, groups and communities.

- **Problem Solving Model** evolved by Helen H. Perlman, is a blending of psychosocial and functional models. In this model it is assumed that all human living is a problem solving process. Here the emphasis is on identifying and explaining the nature of problem, focussing on aspects of personality involved in the problem. It conceptualizes that a person with a problem comes to a place where he or she is offered help through a process. It be used with the individuals who are motivated to use help in a cognitive and interactive process.

- **Socialization Model** was developed by Elizabeth McBroom. It was in response to help 'multi-problem' families. It has utilized socialization theories developed by anthropology, psychology, and sociology. Here the focus is on client in milieu and looks for "islands of competence", and barriers to competent functioning. The goal in helping is to increase competence in areas of work and parenting. It creates success experiences as models. It is appropriate for individuals and families who have not learned basic socialization skills and who need help of a concrete nature.

- **Situational Model** developed by Max Siporin has generalist formulation. It has used field theory, structural and functional theory, situational analysis, territoriality and culture. This model focusses on the situation including social networks, resources, demands, obstacles, and reward-and-sanction systems. Here the goal is to change situations so they will be functional for persons. It is used in wide variety of situations that need change so that individuals can function more adequately.

- **Integrative Model** was developed on basic ideas of Ackerman and influenced by work of Pollak, Spiegal, Beatman and Sherman. Frances Scherz is an important contributor for this model. It is based on a psychoanalytical frame of reference with particular emphasis on ego psychology and role theory. It's focus is on family structure, functioning and history with emphasis on current problems. The goal is to modify or change aspects of the family relationship system that are not functional. It is used with families that have time, energy and motivation to change structure and functioning over a period of time.

- **Life Model or Ecological Model** was developed by Carel B. Germain in 1970s. It puts emphasis on concepts about transactions between people and their environment. It also considers growth and development, identity, competence, autonomy and relatedness. It focusses on person and problem in order to set objectives and devise appropriate action, as well as on life transactions, unresponsiveness of environments, crisis events, and communication - relationship difficulties. It also works to facilitate group

functioning and influence organizational structure, social networks and physical settings.

- **Crisis Intervention Model** was developed on the basis of study of natural disaster. Main contributors to this model are Erich Limderman and Gerald Caplan. Work of Lydia Rapport and Howard Parad also contributed in its development. It lays emphasis on ego-psychology and stress theory. Here the goal is the restoration of social functioning and enhancement of coping capacity. It is used in situations where developmental or situational crisis is limiting adequate social functioning. It can be used with individuals, families or groups of individuals in crisis.

- **Communicative Interactive Model** was developed on the basis of work of Don Jackson and Jay Haley in the project on "Family Therapy in Schizophrenia". Virginia Satir exemplified social work use of this model. Important concepts used are communication, meta communication and family Homeostasis. It lays emphasis on improved family functioning, particularly improved communication. It can be used with family group with verbal orientation and willingness to make a time investment. It is particularly useful when communication is problematic.

Social workers, providing services to groups took long time to identify with social work profession. There was no agreement on whether to identify with social work profession or with others such as recreation and continuing education. They came to the agreement in 1930s and second distinct method of social work practice evolved. Social group work placed more emphasis on people than it did on conditions. It also placed considerable emphasis on the activity and group process as means to enhance growth, democratic functioning and change. Group work was influenced by work of John Dewey. Later on Gisela Konopka and Helen Northen continued to develop the practice theory of this method. Some of the well known models of group work are as under:

- **Developmental Model** developed from work of Coyle, Wilson and Ryland, and Philips. It was articulated by Emanual Tropp. It uses an existential humanistic philosophy. Human beings are seen as free responsible, and

capable of self-realization. Its main focus is on the commonality of members. It can be used in voluntary situation with peer groups or formed groups.

- **Mediating Model** was developed by Willium Schwartz, Lawrence Shulman is a major contributor to this model. It mainly uses systems theory, game theory and small group theory. It focusses on individual interaction, group process and impinging environment. Goals are related to mutual need for self-fulfillment as individuals and society reach out to each other. It is used for helping people negotiate difficult environments.

- **Remedial Model** was developed by Robert Vinter and colleagues and is influenced by the work of Fritz Redl, David Wineman and Gisela Konopka. It is an outgrowth of the use of the group in clinical social work setting. It has utilized social role theory, social behaviour theory, ego psychology, group dynamics, and systems theory. Here the goal is individual change that is remedy for social dysfunctioning. Its focus is on individual in group. It can be used to help malperforming individuals achieve a more desirable state of social functioning.

- **Social Goals Model** was an outcome of practice wisdom in traditional group service agencies. Contributors to this model were Grace Coyle, Helen Philips, Allen Klein, Gertrade Wilson and Hyman Wiener. It is more philosophic than scientific and is influenced by neo-frudian thoughts and social systems theory. It focus is on individual functioning, group process and the environment. It mobilizes the group as a force for social change. It can be used in situations in which group is used to change any part of its environment.

Community organization is third practice method. This distinct practice method was evolved to coordinate and evaluate the effectiveness of various social agencies and social programs in communities. It is primarily concerned with the distribution of financial resources and building linkages among existing services. Important models of community organizations are:

- **Social Action Model** was developed by Saul Alinsky and Richard Cloward. It has used concepts of disadvantaged population, social injustice,

deprivation and inequality. Here community is seen as made up of conflicting interests that are not easily reconcilable and is having scarce resources. In this model client is seen as victim and strategy is to cryatalize issues to develop organization to take action against enemy target. It manipulates mass organizations and political processes. It is used when individuals are seen as victims of an unjust system.

• **Social Planning Model** was developed on the basis of conventional community organization in planning and funding organizations and governmental planning agencies. It sees community as an entity with many interacting systems. It lays emphasis on decision making, power control and the agency system. Its focus is on identifying social problem, its cause, and its possible resolution. It is used where rational planning toward the alleviation of social problems is desired.

Besides the three direct practice methods, two other practice methods also evolved which are administration and research. These two methods are considered as secondary methods.

Multimethod Practice Approach:

In 1951, Hollis - Taylor report, a major study on social work and social work education, recommended that, because the breadth of social work practice required social workers to intervene at more than one level of client system, social work education should prepare students with a beginning level of competence in each of the five practice methods. The multimethod practice approach proved appropriate to meet with these varied demands of the social work practice. But this approach failed to fulfill the commitment of the profession for unifying practice method.

Generalist Practice Approach:

The generalist approach to practice started evolving in the late 1960s. This approach provided the versatility and met with the requirement for flexible approach to social work practice demanded by the growing profession.

Generalist practice contains two fundamental components. It provides a perspective from which the social worker views the practice situation. These perspectives are very comprehensively discussed by Johnson in his book social work practice: a generalist approach.

Second, instead of attempting to make the client's situation fit the methodological orientation of the social worker, the situation is viewed as determining the practice approach to be used. Thus, the social worker is required to have a broad knowledge and skill base, and to have the ability to appropriately select from that base to meet the needs of the clients (Morales & Sheafer, 1998).

It has been contended by many social workers that generalist approach was there right from the beginning of social work practice. However, there is demand to train both graduates and master's level as generalist practitioners due to accreditation requirement. This has led to analyse this approach in detail. Schatz, Jenkins, and Sheafor have developed a model of initial and advance generalist social work, based on their research that documented areas of agreement among experts who have written about generalist social work practice or administered educational programmes that prepared students as generalist. This model recognizes a generic foundation for all social work practice. The generic foundation includes knowledge about social work profession, social work values, the purpose of social work, ethnic/diversity sensitivity, basic communication skills, understanding of human relationships etc.

At the initial generalist level of practice the social worker builds on the generic foundation. The advanced generalist social worker operates from an expanded knowledge base about individuals, groups, organizations and communities. The advance generalist must also develop increased skills to intervene in direct service provision with individuals, families, and groups at one end of the multiple level practice spectrum, and at the other end, address more

complex indirect practice situations such as supervision, administration, and policy and program evaluation.

Specialist Practice Approach:

Specialist social work practice is characterized by the application of selected knowledge and skills to a narrowed area of practice based on practice setting, population served, social problems addressed and/or practice intervention mode used. The areas of specialization identified so far are according to fields of practice like services to family, child and youth, elderly; health; education; business and industry; community development; or according to problem areas, like crime and delinquency; substance abuse; family violence; poverty etc. The other specialization areas are population-at-risk like children, women, aged. Specialization according to intervention methods or role include specific practice approaches with individuals, families and groups; community organization and social planning; research etc. Specialization from practice contexts and perspectives include practice in industry; hospitals; rural and urban areas.

Social Work Practice and Education in India

Social work in India has a very long and ancient history. The act of helping needy and underprivileged is considered to be duty of those who have plenty. The traditional practice of social work is based on religious and humanitarian principles. There is also history of social movement and social reforms and this too is considered as social work. In India the term social work is generally used to include almost any activity which is intended to help, restore or promote some aspects of the physical, economic and social well being of individuals and groups. In its restricted sense it has come to refer to charity giving and other type of helping activities for the economically under privileged and dependent persons (Nagpal, 1996).

The professional practice of social work dates back to 1936 when the first school of social work, then named Sir Dorabji Tata School of Social Work, now

known as Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), was established in Bombay. Even before this school was started, there were very definite efforts made to provide training for social workers. The social service league in Bombay, founded by Gopal Krishna Gokhale, used to train social work practitioners based in several welfare agencies. In 1926 Dr. Clifford Manshardt came to Bombay and worked to set up a neighbourhood house in Nagpada. Nagpada Neighbourhood House tried out a combination of the methods of professional social work (the methods developed in U.S.A.) under the direction of Manshardt. Ten years of experience showed that those methods when judicially adapted to local situation, brought very positive results. This positive experience led to the idea of formal training of social workers, which ultimately culminated into establishing Tata School of Social Work under directorship of Manshardt. That was the beginning of professional social work in India. Before introducing western content of curriculum in Indian setting, it was subjected to critical analysis for its adaptability to Indian conditions. However, lot of debate was generated over it. Academicians in India have expressed their own opinions about it on number of occassions either in their speeches or through their writings.

Thomas (1967) recognized that social work "in broad sense is the sum total of all efforts directed towards the betterment and enrichment of human life".

Gore (1973) was of the opinion that it is more useful to define a profession not by the clients groups they serve or problem areas in which they operate, but by the nature of contribution they make, (to the persons with whom they work), by the type of skills they utilize, by their knowledge base, and work values (Pathak, 1997).

Dasgupta had, in 1968, accepted the concept and methods of social work as they evolved in the west. He believed that modern social work had a substantial universal base in theory and philosophy. But in its practice, that is

the application of methods in a specific cultural situation, some modification were necessary.

Kulkarni opined, 'professional social work as it has evolved in India is a graft on the ancient heritage, and not an independent transplant. In terms of origin, initial efforts and evolution in the pattern of training, areas of specialization, types of jobs, and the status and composition, the professional social work in India has a very distinct model of its own'. He further added, 'It has undoubtedly adopted and adapted a lot from other countries, but it has a soul and body of its own. (Kulkarni, 1993).

It is clear that everyone agrees about the influence of American Social Work on Indian Social Work education and hence on practice of professional social work. But opinions are divided on its impact. On one extreme there is study by Mandal (1989) showing that American influence on Indian social work education is irrelevant, where as on the other extreme the study of social workers' perception by Ejaz(1991) has brought out positive impact and positive perceptions of the American social work influence on social work in India.

There are number of issues concerning social work education in India which are discussed and debated over since last sixty five years. But one thing is clear that in most of the schools of social work in India there is adoptation and adaptation of social work education developed in west particularly in U.S.A.

The review of literature on social work education shows two models of social work education are in operation. One having specialization and the other generic in nature.

Social work schools in which specialization is offered, it is offered in the second year of the training. The field of specialization include; Medical and Psychiatric Social Work, Labour Welfare and Industrial Relation, Family Youth

and Child Welfare, Community Development including urban, rural and tribal Communities and Correctional Social Work and Administration.

In the first year of training common exposure to method courses such as case work, group work and community organization, social work research as well as to social science courses from social work perspective is given. It is relevant here to take note of the comment by Desai which states 'At this stage, there is need to have a fresh look at the specializations we really need to setup and which are feasible in a developing country like India" (Desai M., 1994).

In generic course of social work education exposure to all method courses and social science courses like Man and Society, Human Development and Human Behaviour is provided in first year and in second year of training exposure to all field courses is provided.

Field work is given equal emphasis in training of social workers. It provides real experiences of working with people. It is through field work the social work skills are developed and professional attitude is cultivated. In most of the schools of social work two type of field work programmes are followed. One is concurrent field work and the other is block placement.

The research is the third important component of social work training. In the initial period of social work education, working on research dissertation was compulsory in almost all the schools but later on it is no more compulsory. In some schools project work has taken place of research where as others have continued with research dissertation as partial requirement for M.S.W. degree.

Social Work Practice in Industry in Western Context

According to western perspective, the direct service model, or EAP, has been identified as having its roots in corporate alcoholism program of 1940s (Blomquist, 1979, cited in Abramovitz and Epstern, 1983; Wycers and Kaulukukai, 1984) or, alternatively, in the earlier role of the "Welfare secretary",

who was employed by management in the beginning decades of 20th century (Mor-Borak et al, 1993; Popple, 1981). In making a range of services available to workers and their families, the role of welfare secretary fulfilled the function of social control of the workforce, aiding in employee's efforts to avoid unionization of the workforce (Popple, 1981).

Perspectives on the role of the profession vis-a-vis the labour movement have focussed on the changing nature of social work's relationship with organized labour throughout the century, beginning with the period of union formation, through to the development and expansion of social work practice within labour organizations. This history has been distinguished by both shared goals and periods of conflict, with fluctuation in the nature of this relationship described as owing to labour's perception of social work as having primary allegiance to management goals (Karger, 1988; Straussner & Phillips, 1988).

In describing the development of practice in this field, other authors have traced its root to social reform movement, documenting need among the growing, largely immigrant, industrial labour force and paving the way for the passage of legislation aimed at improving the social and work conditions of this population (Lewis, 1990; Malloy & Kurzman, 1993).

Models of Social work practice in business and industry (corporate sector)

Shank & Jorve identified three models of social work practice in business and industry which are as under :
i)   The employee service model
ii)   The consumer service model and
iii)   The corporate social responsibility model.

The employee service model:

The employee service model of occupational social work focuses on activities that provide direct service to the employees of a business or industry.

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The social worker using this model might develop and implement employee assistance programs and various supervisory training programs. Employee assistance programmes (EAPs) are programmes to assist employees, and their families with personal problems that interfere with employment. Most EAPs are part of the organizational structure of management. EAPs are the largest and most established mode of social work practice in the workplace. EAPs are now a common part of human resources programming. According to U.S. Bureau of the census, 1995. Sixty two percent of those working in medium sized or large firms are covered under EAPs. Nature of services provided under EAPs vary, some programs offer round the clock diagnostic and referral services, short-term treatment, and consultation on work, family problems where as some may simply be a telephone number to an information and referral hotline. In addition, the social worker might provide counseling to individuals or families in relation to marital, family, substance abuse, aging, health, and retirement problems; offer referral to other community agencies or self-help groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous; and consult with management on individual problems. Typical problems the social worker might also address would be the identification of job-related factors such as boredom or stress, an employee's desire to find resources to upgrade his or her job skills, the need for preretirement, or a linkage to Worker's Compensation or unemployment insurance programs.

The consumer service model:

The occupational social worker following the consumer service model might serve as the company's representative to various consumer groups and focus on identifying consumer needs and methods of meeting them. Typically found in banks, public utilities, and government agencies, these social workers help to provide a liaison between consumer groups and social service agencies, develop outreach programs, and provide counseling to customers to meet unique needs.

The corporate social responsibility model:

The third model of practice, the corporate social responsibility model, places the social worker in the role of assisting corporations and businesses to make a commitment to the social and economic well-being of the communities in which they are located. The social workers consult with management on their policies concerning human resources, their donations to nonprofit organizations, and social legislation they may wish to support. In addition, social workers may administer health and welfare benefit programs for employees, represent the company in research and community development activities, and provide linkage between social service, social policy, and corporate interests.

Drawing on previous work in the field, Straussner has developed a typology of five models of occupational social work (Straussner, 1990)
1. Employee service model
2. Employer/work organization service model
3. Consumer service model
4. Corporate social responsibility model
5. Work related public policy model

In America during these last twenty five years the practice of social work in the workplace started developing. It began, when there was increased recognition that employees' well-being was essential to employee productivity. This created place for social workers into the workplace. The abuse of alcohol provided the most substantial opening wedge for social worker in the workplace. Drinking on the job and then sick days off because of alcohol-related accidents became subjects of concern. The need to intervene for the sake of workplace as well as the individual was strongly felt.

Although initial interventions occurred due to alcohol and substance abuse concerns specifically, needs for other kinds of counseling rapidly emerged. If alcohol and drug abusers can be counseled, why not others be consoled who are child abuser or wife abuser? Why not intervene in the

situations leading to absenteeism at workplace? And thus employee assistance programme started expanding rapidly. Employers realized that it may be cheaper to have your own counselors than to pay on an adhoc basis. This is how self-interest and concern for others became the two powerful and operative factors for occupational social work.

Social workers not only work in employee assistance programmes but also in other areas. Social workers work as members of human resources departments doing, in effect, community organization, organizational development, cultural change, and whole range of organizational improvement activities that do not have much to do specifically with the clinical process of interpersonal helping. Social workers are also becoming influential in the area of corporate philanthropy. And social workers are beginning to seek personnel positions.

Social workers use specific social work skills in counseling, interpersonal practice, community organization, and elsewhere to good effect within the workplace. Large number of social worker use social work training as a generic basic training for a wide range of corporate positions.

Kurtzman provided list of job description of tasks which social workers might undertake in business or industry which is as under :

- Counseling or other activities with troubled employees in jeopardy of losing their job to assist them with their personal problems and to help them achieve and maintain a high level of performance;
- Advising on the use of community services to meet the needs of clients and establishing linkages with such programs;
- Training front-line personnel (union representatives, foreman, line supervision) to enable them to determine when changes in an employee's job performance warrant referral to a social service unit and carrying out an appropriate approach to the employee that will result in a referral;

- Developing and overseeing the operation of a union or management information system which will record information on services and provide data for analysing the unit's (human resources) program;

- Conceiving of a plan for the future direction of the (human resources) program that it based on the identification of unmet needs and current demographic trends;

- Offering consultation to labor or management decision makers concerning the development of a human resource policy;

- Helping to initiate welfare, community health, recreational or educational programs for active or retired employees or members;

- Assisting in the administration of the benefit and health care structure and helping plan for new initiatives;

- Consulting on the development and administration of an appropriate affirmative action plan for women, minorities and the disabled;

- Advising on corporate giving or labor coalition building and organizational positions in relation to pending social welfare legislation.

These kinds of tasks could be carried out through a variety of positions. Hurtzman mentioned, among others, the following jobs:

personnel services worker, educational program director, occupational safety and health officer, health and security plan manager, membership services coordinator, career training and upgrading advisor, preretirement services, workaday care consultant, legislative analyst, benefit plan administrator, community service coordinator, alcoholism program supervisor and director of retiree services.

Industry as Main Field of Social Work in Indian Context

From the beginning of social work education and professional practice in India, labour welfare and industrial relations was considered as one of the important fields of social work practice. It was not considered as a field of social work practice in America at that time. And therefore the practice of social work in industry in considered as an indigenous development.

Here it is important to note that this field is included in social work as field of practice because industrial labour was thought to be an under privileged group of population needing special welfare services in industrial setting.

The impetus for training of personnel in this field came as a result of enactment of Factories Act 1948. It stated "every factory employing five hundred or more workers should have a labour welfare officer who must be a graduate of an approved institution". This act not only deals with welfare functions, but also substantially covers the increasingly important responsibilities of industrial relations and personnel administration at the factory level. The industrial concerns and government departments had pressed the Tata Institute to train personnel in this field since its inception. In response to this need, Mr. D.M.Vasudev Moorthy, member of Faculty of Tata Institute, was sent for specialized training and observation to U.S. After his return to India in 1948, he was placed in charge of the new specialization in Industrial relations and personnel management (Desai, M.; 1991).

The opening of tremendous job opportunities for social work graduates in this field attracted the students to this field. In a survey of twenty seven schools of social work in India, Labour welfare and personnel management was found to be the most popular specialization. Nineteen schools listed it as a social work specialization (U.G.C., 1980). In the same survey it was revealed that several institutions offered only labour welfare and one other specialization. This was because of students' interest in the specializations that carry greater salaries and benefits (Desai, M.; 1991). Kulkarni also noted, "Labour welfare and personnel management, alone accounted for a major part of the students intake and largest single percentage of jobs to which they were recruited (Kulkarni, 1993).

The other reason to take up career in this field is, it provides ample scope for upward mobility in career.

A M.S.W. who joins as an assistant welfare officer or a trainee soon moves to the position of Manager, Personnel and Administration, reaching to the positions of vice president, H.R. or President, H.R. No other field of social work provides these kind of opportunities for rapid promotions during their careers. In the other fields like Medical and Psychiatric social worker, the M.S.W. joins an Medical and/or psychiatric social worker and retires as same.

Knowledge, Values and Skills for Social Work

Knowledge, Values and Skills are used in the social work practice. Knowledge is that part of reality that is confirmable. The knowledge base of the social work is complex, partly borrowed from other disciplines. It explains the functioning of persons and social situation. It also directs the response to need. Values are what is preferred or can be considered as guide for behaviour. Values that concern social work are those of the client, the social worker, the profession, as well as the general cultural and societal values of the situation. These calues can conflict with one another in fact, a value system usually has conflicting parts. Social work values contain preferred conceptions of persons, preferred outcomes for persons, and preferred instrumentalities for dealing with persons. The social work code of ethics expresses what ought to be done in professional practice. Skills bring knowledge and values together and convert them into action. Skills must be developed through use over time. Social workers should have a variety of skills for use in practice. Choices are made to which knowledge, values and skills are applied in each practice situation.

The Knowledge base of Social Work Practice

Brown has tried to identify knowledge that is common and relevant to the practice. It includes:

Knowledge that informs the practitioner about the clients experience and context. This knowledge is derived from other social sciences like sociology and psychology.

Ideas drawn from sociology, social theory and political theory offer practitioners ways of understanding the society and institutions within which they practice. One of the major ways sociology has contributed to social work has been by its contribution to an understanding of social problems. An understanding of poverty, crime, mental illness, deviance, substance abuse, communatism and violence has been facilitated by the input of sociological theories into social work's knowledge base.

Psychology offers explanations of individual's behaviour and relationships with others. Social work has used psychological ideas within two separate frameworks: human growth and development and psychopathology. Social workers need a working understanding of human development to make an assessment of their clients' circumstances. Behavioural psychology has offered models of understanding behaviour and models of change.

Knowledge that helps the practitioner plan appropriate intervention. This covers variety of theory, models and approaches. It also covers methods of social work intervention and process involved in social work intervention.

Practitioners need knowledge for formulating a complex circumstances, experience and context. They should also be familiar with models of social work interventions and the proceses involved in intervention. This is the area often referred to as the social work knowledge and it covers variety of theories, models and approaches. All the three aspects viz. theories and their corresponding models, methods of intervention and processes involved in intervention, are the core of social work's knowledge base. However, well social workers understand a clients situation and experience, if they cannot intervene in an informed and effective way they are of little use.

Knowledge that clarified the practitioners understanding of the legal policy, procedural and organisation context in which their practice takes place.

A working understanding of legislation, policies and procedures is an essential component of the knowledge base of social work. It is also the aspect of social work knowledge that practitioners feel most familiar with, particularly in relation to procedures. They also need to have knowledge of their own agency. This involves a practical knowledge of the agency's structure, how it is

managed, and how the individual worker fits within the organization' policies and procedures relevant to the social worker's context; roles and responsibilities relationships to other relevant agencies and their operations, in terms of their structures, policies, procedures, provisions and personnels.

Values of the Social Work

The preamble to the code of ethics of the National Association of Social Worker(NASW) state, "The mission of the Social Work Profession is rooted in a set of core value. These core values embraced by social workers throughout the professions history are the foundation of social work's unique purpose and perspective.

The core values are
1. Service
2. Social Justice
3. Dignity and Woth of the Prson
4. Importance of Human Relations
5. Integrity
6. Competence

Based on these values NASW developed ethical principles which leads to development of professional attitudes. These principles are as under.

Value I: Service

Ethical Principle: Social worker's primary goal is to help people in need and to address social problems.

Social workers elevate service to other above self-interest. Social workers draw on their knowledge, value, and skill to help people in need and to addredd social problems. Social workers are encouraged to volunteer some portion of their professional skills with no expectation of significant financial return.

Value II: Social Justice

Ethical Principle: Social workers challenge social injustice.

Social workers pursue social change, particularly with and no behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people. Social workers social change efforts are focussed primarily on issues of poverty, discrimination, and other forms of social injustice. These activities seek to promote sensitivity to and knowledge about oppression, and cultural ethnic promote sensitivity to and knowledge about oppression, and cultural ethnic diversity. social workers strive to ensure equality of opportunity, access to needed information, services and resources and meaningful participation in decision making for all people.

Value III: Dignity and Worth of the Person

Ethical Principle: Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person.

Social worker treat person in caring and respectful fashion, mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social Workers promote clients socially responsible self-determination. Social workers seek to enhance clients capacity and opportunity to change and to address their own needs. Social workers are congnizant of their dual responsibility to clients and to the broader society. They seek to resolve conflicts between clients' interest and the broader society's interests in a socially responsible manner consistent with the values, ethical principle, and ethical standards of the profession.

Value VI: Importance of Relationship

Ethical Principle: Social workers recognize the central importance of human relationships.

Social workers understand that relationships between and among people are an important vehicle for change. Social workers engage people as partners in the helping process. social workers seek to strengthen relationships among people in purposeful effort to promote, restore, maintain, and enhance the well-being of individuals, families, social groups, organization, and communities.

Value V: Integrity

Ethical Princiuple: Social workers behave in a trustworthy manner.

Social workers are continually aware of the profession's mission, values, ethical principle, and ethical standards and practice in a manner consistent ethical principle, and ethical standards and practice in a manner consistent with them. Social workers act honestly and responsibly and promote ethical practice on the part of the organization with which they are affiliated.

Value VI: Competence

Ethical Principle: Social workers practice within their areas of competrence and develop and enhance their profession expertise.

Social worker continually strive to increase their professional knowledge and skills and to apply them in practice. Social workers should aspire to contribute to the knowledge base of the profession.

Skills for Social Work Practice:

Skills is the practice component that brings knowledge and values together and converts them into action.

Datton and Kohil have identified five broad categories of skills. These are

1. **Cognitive skills:** This category covers analytical skills, evaluative skills and research skills.
2. **Administrative skills:** It includes record keeping, report writing and working knowledge of information technology.
3. **Interpersonal skills:** It includes communication both verbal and non-verbal skills. Understanding of self/self-awareness, making and sustaining working relationships, using authority, working with difference, working in partnership, advocacy and negotiation.
4. **Decision making skills.**
5. **Use and Management of resources.**

Social work knowledge values and skills give direction to the practice and if there are gaps in knowledge or values or skills or in all the three, it will have impact on his practice and therefore it is important to understand the gaps perceived by social work practitioners so that efforts can be made to bridge the gaps, through developing appropriate educational programmes.