



REVIEW ARTICLE

A STUDY ON ASPECTS OF SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTION ON SELF HELP GROUP MEMBERS

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ABSTRACT

Social work is an academic and professional discipline that seeks to facilitate the welfare of communities, individuals, families, and groups. It may promote social change, development, cohesion, and empowerment. Underpinned by theories of social sciences and guided by principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility, and respect for diversities, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance well-being. A practicing professional with a degree in social work is called a social worker. Examples of fields a social worker may be employed in are Poverty relief, life skills, and community development, forensic, industrial relations, child protection, and elder protection, Women's rights, human rights, addictions, rehabilitation, disaster management, mental health, disabilities and Administration. Social Work Administration is also one of the important methods. The need for social work which takes place within a framework of government policy and statute. In practice and at present, this refers largely to local authority social work services which have powers and responsibilities to intervene in the lives of individuals and families, generally with their consent but compulsorily in specified circumstances. It is in these areas of social work that many of the tensions and conflicts arise, not only for social workers but for people using their services and for the public. Some may be deterred from seeking social work help by fears that it could result in judgments about their ability to cope independently or care adequately for their children. There have long been debates about the relationship between the supportive, caring and enabling elements of social work and the need at times to exercise powers of removal or control for the protection of the individual, other family members or the public at large. This is a particular feature of local authority social work, and currently much less of an issue for most social workers employed in voluntary organizations or working independently. Patterns of employment are changing, however, with more social work posts located in multi-disciplinary and joint agency settings, and policy initiatives which could see more functions undertaken by voluntary and community organizations on behalf of the statutory Current policy direction and changing public expectations could also lead to a more fundamental shift away from a focus on statutory intervention and towards a culture where people positively seek social work support as part of their own problem-solving strategies. This would be consistent with policies to encourage independence and social inclusion, to help prevent problems arising or becoming worse by offering earlier support, and to enable people to take maximum responsibility for managing their own lives and playing their part as active citizens. It could also lead to social work becoming a mainstream, universally available service to which people turn, as they turn to their GP, for advice and assistance with complex problems and concerns. Here the Researcher study the Women self help group members with use of Social work interventions. A SHG is a group of about 10 to 20 people, usually women. From a similar class and region. Who come together to form savings and credit organization. They pool financial resources to make small interest bearing loans to their members. This process creates an ethic that focuses on savings first. The setting of terms and conditions and accounting of the loan are done in the group by designated member. The Study is Purely Theoretical. The Study is based on secondary data sources. The necessary information about the Self help groups and social perspectives, its various components are collected from Books, Journals, Internet Source or related topic. The Researcher study about the Social work intervention on self help groups in detail, The Research Work includes, Concept of Self help groups, Methodology, Social work intervention on self help group members etc.

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INTRODUCTION

Self-help groups (SHG) are a small voluntary association of poor people, preferably from the same socio-economic background. They come together for the purpose of solving their common problems through self-help and mutual help.

The SHG promotes small savings among its members (Sharma, 2001). The savings are kept with a bank. This common fund is kept in the name of SHG. Usually, the number of members in one SHG does not exceed twenty. The concept of SHG is based on the following principles.

1. Self help supplemented with mutual help can be a powerful vehicle for the poor in their socio-economic development.

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2. Participative financial services management is responsive and efficient.
3. The Poor need not only credit support, but also savings and other services.
4. The Poor can save the bankable and SHGs as clients result in wider outreach, lower transaction cost and much lower risk costs for the banks.
5. Creation of a common fund by contributing small savings on a regular basis.
6. Flexible democratic system of working.
7. Loaning is done mainly on trust with a bare documentation and without any security.
8. Accounts loaned are small, frequent and for short duration.
9. Defaults are rare mainly due to group pressure and
10. Periodic meeting ensures non-traditional savings.

Methodology

The study is based on the secondary data sources. The necessary information about the self help groups, Social work interventions and its various components are collected from various books, journals, internet source of related topics.

Social work with SHG'S members

Local authority social workers are often organized in specialist teams. In one department, there are teams with titles including women in need, women protection, and people with learning disabilities. Disabled people, mental health, drugs and alcohol, older people, youth and adult offenders. There are various rationales for these structures. It is said that social workers need to limit the range of people they work with because of the levels of specialized practice knowledge and skill required; that the team definitions relate to structures in other services and systems such as the NHS and the justice system, and make for better joint working across professional and agency boundaries; and that the specialist focus ensures a fair allocation of attention and resource to different groups of people needing services and support. Women in need and what risk often have physical, social, economic or health problems of various kinds. Adults of working age may have more than one disabling condition, exacerbated by obstacles reflecting stigma, poverty, exclusion and discrimination. Amongst older people, ageing presents an increasing range of physical, sensory, intellectual, emotional and psychological challenges, coupled often with environmental and economic limitations. Specialist social work team structures can militate against seeing people's situation in the round, and add to the barriers which need to be overcome if they are to achieve the outcomes they are seeking.

A number of key considerations for social work with SHG's members flow from the preceding analysis:

- The prime focus for work with is the well-being of the SHG's members. 'The end of the journey to adulthood each child should have reached his/her potential in terms of emotional and social maturity, be in good health, and have attained a level of academic achievement and other skills. Women should be assisted to overcome barriers that create inequality.
- Local authorities are required to promote and safeguard the welfare of women in need in their area and so far as consistent with that duty, promote the upbringing of

women by their families. Women's well-being is thus crucial. Social work skills, knowledge and persistence may be needed to establish working relationships of trust, find the key to engaging the family's cooperation and interest, identify the issues with the family, lead them through the process of assessment, help them participate in determining the direction of change and ensure their aims, capacities and plans are identified and developed. Social workers may also help children and parents to maintain any changes made. Continued support of this kind may attract criticism as encouraging dependency, but practice experience shows that failing to provide such support may reduce the return on substantial investment of social work resources.

- In families it is the women to whom social workers owe the greater duty of care. women can be clear about what they need. There may be tensions between women needs and wishes, . women needs and wishes, the views and wishes of the wider family, of the community, other professionals, and with the requirements of the law, regulation and procedure. Even where the decision is to remove a women the way social workers conduct their business can make a difference. Thus social work has to respond to needs for the sake of the women, but may need to abandon them to maintain the primacy of the women's welfare. The consequences of getting the balance wrong in either direction expose women to suffering and pain. Social work requires controlled, emotional commitment, readily discernible as present or lacking to most users. Sometimes the nature of the issue will demand decisions that appear to undermine that commitment. Social workers have to take the decision and maintain the commitment.
- The social worker works as therapist and advocate or broker. While the change to greater teamwork and integrated assessments places more equal responsibilities on the range of professions and agencies, at least for the time being, social work needs to champion those who cannot speak up for themselves or who alienate others through disruptive behavior or poor social skills.
- Social workers also work with people who want change, results and improvement and for whom none comes. Supporting and being alongside people whose lives are painful, is more controversial in certain aspects of children and families work, where the obstacles to meeting the objectives for the child appear to emanate from the parents' inability or unwillingness to provide the desired environment and care. Removal may be the societal response, but there is no guarantee that alternative care, in the wider family, or in family or residential placement, will meet the needs of the women. Social work is needed to point out the difficulties, weigh up the choices, and stay with the situation, listening and supporting, preventing deterioration where possible, organizing compensatory experiences for the women, being alert to the signals of possibilities for positive and negative change, and keeping alert to the whole picture, while other professionals address more discrete needs.
- Social work with women is not confined to the statutory sector, and takes place in a variety of voluntary and independent organisations. It is highly regulated and increasingly all sectors are brought within the statutory frame. This may result in an approach that

legitimizes only that work which is in line with objectives and targets. The state wants women to flourish; individuals; some may not have the capacity to meet targets. Social work bears the burden of working with the individual within the context of a framework for the many. Social work is required to help to prevent tragedies, to give confidence to families to flourish and to the state to be safe. It is needed to hold these balances and tensions on behalf of women and on behalf of the wider community.

- Were social work to be seen as non-threatening, available to all at the behest of the user and to meet the requirements of the user, social work by invitation rather than social work intervention, women members might also value social work's 'whole person/whole situation' approach.

From the adult's point of view, the need for social work intervention is likely to arise if they are unable, without it, to achieve outcomes they are seeking for themselves and their families. Social work with SHG's members,

- Encouraging all professionals involved to take and keep taking an all-round view from the person's perspective
- Working together with the person and others on strategies for their empowerment, independence and control of their own lives
- Identifying the person's abilities, assets and potential for capacity-building, and enabling them to develop to the full
- Assisting the person to explore and access alternative living situations, including those with the benefits of smart housing and housing-based support schemes
- Assisting the person with their assessment of their support needs and preferred solutions, and with securing satisfactory arrangements
- Where the person wishes, helping them to access direct payments and establish and manage support arrangements to their specifications
- Assisting the person and their family through the transition to higher levels of support needs, whether through increased disability, ill-health or bereavement, or in order to access opportunities for independence and participation
- Helping to resolve charging and micro finance issues in the user's interests
- Supporting the person to access help with financial matters.
- Supporting the person in exercising their human and civil rights, including rights to privacy, family life, freedom from enforced constraints
- Intervening in complex partnership or family situations to resolve relationship problems, conflicts of interest and damaging interaction affecting physical and mental health
- Ensuring, with maximum input from the individual, safeguards against exploitation, unnecessary constraint, neglect, domestic violence and abuse
- With the person, their family and others they trust, helping them avoid being or becoming an unacceptable risk to themselves or others
- Within statutory frameworks, intervening to prevent the person becoming an unacceptable threat to others or themselves

- Helping carers to maintain their support role in line with the person's preferences and their own wishes, without the carers suffering exploitation, damage to health, isolation or social exclusion, and avoiding over-protection or undue pressure on the person
- Helping SHG's women with restricted capacity to protect their interests in relation to family members, neighbours and others who could take advantage of them.

Aspects of social work intervention

Here we describe different stages and aspects of social work intervention with Self Help Group members' families.

Identifying the problem to be overcome

The first stage to overcoming obstacles is to recognize and describe the problem and acknowledge that change is needed. Social workers can assist the family to identify the issues using empathy and problem solving skills. In any of the situations outlined in there may be a number of factors impinging on the women members' capacity to overcome obstacles and achieve desired outcomes. Some may be immediately apparent. Others may be more difficult to discern. It is likely that neither women is aware of all the elements contributing to difficulties. They may be oblivious to the consequences that may ensue if difficulties remain unresolved. Particularly in cases referred by others for local authority social work intervention, the family may desire outcomes that conflict with legislation and/or social work's responsibilities to protect or control. For example, women may be using prohibited substances, parents views of women care may leave children wandering the streets at an age and/or times which put them at risk. Social work's distinctive contribution here is to use empathy, communication and relationship skills to achieve acknowledgement that change is needed. A change in organizational response may be required. Both individuals and organizations may need to be convinced of the need for change.

Assessing the situation

At an early stage of contact social work involves assessment of the women situation through appraisal of what is seen and heard in contact with the family in and out of the home, through careful interviewing, enabling members of the family to express their feelings and views, and through communication with other organisations and professionals in contact with the family. The social worker will lead the family through the process, highlighting and explaining the importance of examining the various kinds of information. Social workers will use a range of knowledge, models and frameworks to decide what information is needed and to assess the information collected. To ensure that necessary information is collected social workers need to establish working relationships of trust with family and professionals. They must be able to understand the cultures and attitudes of all those they involve, through their own knowledge and skill, or by drawing on that of others. Assessment continues throughout contact and involvement with children and families. Recognition and understanding of behavioral patterns, systems of communication and patterns of events over time are vital to successful outcomes. In situations referred to the local authority for intervention the social worker may have difficulty in engaging the family's cooperation and interest. Social work

skills and persistence are needed to find the key to engagement. In recognition of the difficulties inherent in achieving effective assessments the Department of Health introduced the Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (DH 2000), referred to above in section 2.3. Macdonald (2002) notes the pitfalls that arise when conducting assessments. It is not enough simply to follow a framework setting out the areas to be investigated, social workers need to exercise professional judgment and be alert to unconscious bias which may creep into the work, distorting assessments and the degree of risk. The Department for Education and Skills is developing a Common Assessment Framework to help ensure that all children achieve the outcomes set out in Every Child Matters:

‘Through the CAF, we intend to implement a common approach to needs assessment that can be used by the whole children’s workforce, whether they are in universal or specialist services, for any child in need of support. Its aim will be to provide a mechanism whereby any practitioner working with a child or young person can conduct a good quality, but relatively non-specialized, assessment of unmet needs and, where appropriate, share it with other agencies. It aims to provide a non-bureaucratic ‘whole child’ assessment... ‘Common assessment would also essentially form a front-end to more specialist assessments, which would themselves need modification to accommodate the standards imposed by the CAF.’

It is recognized that the CAF will need to have a relationship to responsibilities to promote and safeguard the well-being of women in need:

‘Common assessment would normally therefore be undertaken before a decision about referral to social services is made.

Social care workers will be expected to use this framework but it is clear that this will not replace the more in depth assessment for children in greater need. The Scottish Executive has established a multi-agency working group to prepare an assessment framework for use by all those working with children: the Integrated Assessment Framework (Scottish Executive 2004b, Annex C).

Empowering the family

It is endemic to social work that family members should participate in determining the direction of change. What is happening in the family may belie the wishes of family members and undermine the needs of some or all may be able to express or live out their wishes. Social workers seek to enable family members to identify both what they want and the extent to which they are able, with or without help, to achieve those ends. They will discuss ways of achieving those things that the family cannot currently achieve and develop plans for achieving them. In these ways they begin to enable and empower families. The extent to which they can develop relationships of trust with family members will determine how far family aims, capacities and plans are identified and developed.

Dealing with conflicting needs and wishes

While this partnership approach is at the heart of social work, there is a further responsibility to ensure that the needs of those

who are most vulnerable in the situation are not neglected to their detriment. In families it is the women to whom social workers owe the greater duty of care. There may be tensions between children’s needs and wishes, parents’ needs and wishes, the views and wishes of the wider family, of the community, other professionals, and with the requirements of the law, regulation and procedure. Social workers must take all of this into account. Consulting with others they must judge what action should be taken in the best interests of the women, though where there is a dispute with women it will be the children’s hearing tribunal that makes the ‘final’ decision. The protective role is always at the forefront of social work considerations. The need for immediate protective action may appear to frustrate the family’s goals. It is in such areas of social control that conflict between perspectives about the need for social work intervention and what it should be about is most apparent.

If the assessment is that the women’s need for protection requires removal from its parent(s) the resulting action may indeed frustrate the family’s goals in the long, as well as the short, term. The requirement for formal processes to be followed and the work entailed often divert the social worker’s time, attention and efforts away from the work needed to enable the parents to meet their support goals. The action may also break any relationship of trust between a particular social worker and women and destroy any possibility of working together on a longer-term goal. Nonetheless, the way social workers conduct their business can make a difference. Looking at families’ involvement in women protection Thoburn et al (1995) found that parents and children most valued being cared about as individuals, with both strengths and weaknesses.

Achieving change, meeting goals: direct and indirect work

If the assessment allows for the women to remain in the care of women the social worker may become principal person enabling the women to achieve their goals. The social worker’s skills in counselling may help the parent(s) identify why they are not attaining their goals, what they need to do to meet their own and their women’s needs. The social worker may develop and implement a programme of work with the parent(s) or child, negotiate for another professional to undertake a programme of work with women members(s) negotiate access to day care, respite care, welfare benefits, any or all of which may relieve stress or exhaustion. The social worker works as therapist and advocate or broker. Again, the social worker’s role can be the necessary element in making a package of services successful: ...there should always be a key worker who will offer continuity and a supportive or therapeutic relationship as well as marshalling and coordinating the packages of help and monitoring the child’s well-being...If this element of continuity is in place our study suggests that additional workers can with advantage be brought in alongside the key worker to provide short term specialist assessment or therapeutic services...’ (Thoburn et al., 1995) [But in tertiary prevention it] appears important to combine it [social network interventions] with intensive casework, advocacy and case management...particularly in the early stages of relationship-building with families. (Macdonald, 2002, examining a controlled study by Gaudin et al, writer’s words in brackets) As advocates, negotiators or brokers social workers have to understand the needs of the family members and have knowledge about services, their purpose, qualities, accessibility and availability. Social workers must be able to

put a convincing case to the service provider and provide relevant and sufficient information for the provider to make an informed decision. For the provider to have to collect information to make a full reassessment of the need for the service would be inefficient and unhelpful to the user. As before, having obtained a service for the user, the social worker is involved in assessment, measuring the progress being made towards change and the effect of the process and any change on the overall situation for the family.

The social worker's protective role may extend to promoting the particular needs of vulnerable women in the context of services designed for the less vulnerable. While the change to greater teamwork and integrated assessments places more equal responsibilities on the range of professions and agencies, at least for the time being, social work needs to champion those who cannot speak up for themselves or who alienate themselves through disruptive behavior or poor social skills. Social workers may take a direct role with children, including helping them to come to terms with transitions in their lives brought about by parent's inability to continue caring for them, on account of, for example, of illness or substance abuse. They may counsel young careers helping them to work out the extent of the care they can give and what they personally need to do in the absence of sufficient support for the parent/s needs. Social workers may also help SHG's women members to maintain any changes made. Continued support of this kind may attract criticism as encouraging dependency but practice experience has indicated that failing to provide such support may reduce the return on substantial investment of social work resources. A complementary strategy is to assist and encourage families in developing wider family and social networks.

Conclusion

Social Work methods are purely professional knowledge, not borrowed from any other disciplines. It is also called social work practice. Social work methods and application differentiate social work and many others social sciences that base mere on theoretical knowledge. For instance, sociology, psychology, anthropology and philosophy all lack specific methods like social work although having well advanced theory. Here the necessary information about the Self help groups and social perspectives, its various components are collected from Books, Journals, Internet Source or related topic. The Researcher study about the Social work intervention on self help groups in detailed manner.

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