**Social Action**

**What is Social Action**?

As can be understood from the name itself, there are three fundamental points in the concept: first the existence of social action, then those who do the action and third those who are expected to benefit from the action.

Social action is described as an individual’s, group’s, or community’s effort within the framework of social philosophy and practices that aim at achieving social progress to modify social policies to improve social legislation, health and welfare services. From this description, we can understand that social action is an active, conscious, well thought effort.

This means any concerned individual, group or the community itself may involve in the task and process of social action to help other individuals, and groups who are facing a certain social problem or for whom a positive social change is necessary. A community can involve in social action to solve its own problems.

A more formal definition of social action is that it is the systematic, conscientious effort directed at influencing the basic social condition and policies, out of which arise the problems of social adjustment and mal-adjustment to which our services as social welfare are addressed ( Morales and Sheafor, 1997). Social action is part and parcel of social service. Both definitions make this fact clear: Social action is an effort. Whoever may make his effort, it should be systematic, programmed, and conscientious.

**Methods of Social Work**

**Main Concern of Social Work**

In the definition of social action, it has been pointed out that any social action effort should be carried out in the framework of social philosophy and social work. The concept of social work, here is worthy of definition.

Social work is a professional discipline (within the framework of social welfare programs and services) designed to assist people in enhancing the quality of their lives and their social relationships (Day 1996). The main concerns and objectives of social work are the following (Morales and Sheafor, op cit):

• Service to individual in the performance of their various roles and relationships; • To give assistance to individuals, groups or communities when they face difficulties in making use of their capacities;

• Avoiding negative factors that affect development;

• To release potentialities in individuals, groups or communities and show the means to exploit those resources and potentialities; and

• Development of capacity to manage one's own life.

The justification for social work is that the complexity of modern life makes it difficult for the individual to develop his optimum potential, and social workers in their role as mediators, are increasingly called on to help people to contend with society's manifold social problems.

**Basic Principles**

The fundamental philosophy, which makes up the professional ethics of the field of social work involve the following principles:

• A belief in the value and dignity of humans;

• Respect to people;

• Self-direction;

• Accepting and appreciating the idea and belief system of people;

• To work in collaboration with people, not to work for them;

• Dedication to human dignity; and

• Respect for and understanding of uniqueness of every human being and the values of client system. The main value here is that, social work agencies do not work for, but work with their client system.

**Types of Methods of Social Work**

The methods of social work are meant to be the ways, the means and techniques through which social workers and social work agencies carry out their task (activity). It is the how of social work. The most effective and known methods of social work are:

i) Working with individuals

ii) Working with groups, and

iii) Working with communities, or community based work (Suppers and Wells, 1996).

Working with Individuals This method of social work is called casework. Here, the individual is taken as a case. The principle here is to work with not for individuals. The purpose is to address to someone who is in socially strainful situation thereby overcoming the problem (Ibid). Before engaging in casework, the following points must be considered:

• Knowledge of the science of human behavior and relations,

• Knowledge of theories of helping people,

• Types of problems individuals face,

• Why people are in socially strainful situations, and

• The role of social forces and the environment on the individual.

**Group Work**

Working with groups is called group work. It is the method (technique) of sponsoring and working with voluntary social groups such as families, clubs and gangs in order to develop socially desirable goals (qualities). The emphasis is treatment of the individual. Unlike casework, group work focuses on the relation of the individual to the group and social growth of the group itself.

The aim is to give the individual satisfying experience through group relation and eventually enable him/her to make his/her own contributions to the life of the society. Here, consideration is not only on the economic needs of the individuals, but other aspects such as affection, security, acceptance and other emotional and psychosocial needs of the individual. Some of the principles of group-work include:

• A group worker has to be able to make the client system solve their problem;

• Use of scientific methods like observation, analysis and fact-finding are essential; • Creating purposeful relationship between the group work agent and the group;

• Conscious use of self: including self-knowledge, self discipline, etc, in relation to client system; and

• Acceptance of people without necessarily accepting their behavior (Suppes and Wells, op cit).

. **Working with Communities**

This method of social work is called community organization. It involves the process of creating and maintaining the progressive and more effective adjustment between community resources and community welfare needs. The aim is to make adjustment between the two, which is possible through the effort of professional workers on the one hand, and individuals and groups in the community on the other. The most relevant method of social work is community organization in respect to the problem of developing countries. On the other hand, case group works are more applicable to the problems in developed societies. This is because most of the social pathologies in industrialized societies are at individual and group levels.