

Public Health and Midwifery Section

The Health Visitor a Social Worker

Summary of a Talk by Dr. Kazal to Members of the Delhi Branch
of the Health Visitors' League.

What is Social Work?

It is an accepted fact that in all societies there are a large number of individuals in distress, who are incapable of solving their own problems without help from the social group. Self preservation as well as the spirit of humanity requires that the well-being of all members of society should be set as a goal. Otherwise the rate of social progress is slackened.

By social work is meant any form of persistent and deliberate effort to improve living or working conditions in the community, or to relieve, diminish or prevent distress, whether due to weakness of character, or to pressure of external circumstances. It is therefore the adjustment of men and women to their environments or social relationships. This help may be given to a family group or an individual, and therefore the basis of social work is eminently practical.

What is it that creates the need for Social Work?—Unfavourable circumstances in life.

What are favourable Circumstances?—To have one's life smooth-sailing and make it pleasant and worth living certain desired elements are necessary.

They are :—

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| 1. A Pleasant home. | 6. Healthy recreation. |
| 2. Fresh Air. | 7. Human affection. |
| 3. Sunshine. | 8. Educational opportunities. |
| 4. Abundant pure water. | 9. Congenial occupation. |
| 5. Wholesome food. | 10. Security. |
| 11. Participation in community life. | |

How large a portion of our population enjoys these?

In modern cities few but the wealthy can afford pleasant homes with air and sunshine. In many families food is not scarce but perhaps ill-balanced. Recreation of some sort is present in cities, although it often becomes a source of demoralization.

Human affection is too uncertain a quantity to permit any generalization as to its presence or absence. Educational opportunities are available only to a chosen few. Congenial occupation, security and community activity are more often absent than present. In our country probably only 5% to 10% are getting some of those desired elements. 85% of our population, which is in the rural area, do not get even a single one of these desired elements. Yes, one might say they get plenty of sunshine but actually they get too much of it, which is harmful. So you will realise what a herculean task there is before a new social worker. Economic insecurity is enhanced by lack of general education and specialized vocational training. Education, like social work, seeks to guide the individual to a satisfying life.

Social work tends to begin where education, industry, the State, the Church and the family have failed to provide the individual worker with what he needs for adjustment for social life.

Three main Characteristics of Social Work.

1. Social work takes account of the multiple needs of the individual and treats them as a unit. Minister, Doctor, Lawyer.

2. Flexibility of programme is an essential of social work.
3. Social work is normally financed by society and not by the individual benefited and served.

Social Work :—Prevents social evils and is divided up in the following manner :—

Administration and organisation :—Case work. Group work.

Councils and Federations.

Public Welfare Administration

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| 1. Child welfare. | 5. Protective work. |
| 2. Family welfare | 6. Psychiatric social work. |
| 3. Medical social service. | 7. Visiting teaching. |
| 4. Probation and parole. | 8. Miscellaneous case work. |

The public expects the social worker to make his contribution to charity in the form of low-paid services.

Social work exists chiefly for the benefit of the "disadvantaged" economically. Since it is financed by those who do not usually expect to benefit directly by it, a social worker must accept the principle of sacrifice, living for others. Salaries usually are not in proportion to the value of the services they give and are based much more nearly on cost of living. Those who take up social work as a vocation cannot take it up as a means of earning a livelihood in a congenial profession. The spirit of service to humanity and self-sacrifice are necessary. Great tact, patience, sympathy and understanding of human minds and problems are essential. The task is great and only those who have a missionary zeal should take it up.

Social work offers little to those eager for material reward. Your responsibilities are immense, the task is herculean. But you have great opportunities to leave the world a little better than you found it. You are a councillor of Society. Social workers cannot go far towards the goal they have set themselves, without the co-operation of public welfare agencies.

In your hands to some extent lies the happiness and well-being of many individuals.

A social worker must be intelligent, well educated, disinterested, and possess initiative with high qualifications as a citizen.

WANTED

1. Assistant Nursing Superintendent on a consolidated salary of Rs. 350 p.m. Provident fund, furnished quarters, free lights, fans and laundry provided.

Qualifications :—General trained and midwifery; must have held some administrative post

2. Nursing Sister on a consolidated salary of Rs. 300 to Rs. 350. Provident fund, furnished quarters, free light, fans and laundry provided.

Qualifications :—Must have general and midwifery training. One capable of teaching and training pupils for the Punjab Central Midwives Board Examination preferred.

Applications with copies of certificates should be sent to the Principal Medical Officer, Jodhpur State, Jodhpur.