

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK
GURU GHASIDAS VISHWAVIDYALAYA, BILASPUR (CG)
PRE- PhD COURSE WORK EXAM 2014
CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

PAPER CODE: AS-620

MODEL ANSWER

I. Objective Question Answer:

1. c
2. c
3. c
4. c
5. b
6. a
7. a
8. d
9. c
10. c
11. a
12. a
13. a
14. c
15. b
16. b

II. Long Answer Questions:

Ans1. Social Capital: ‘Social capital is the ‘the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition’ (Bourdieu 1983: 249).

‘Social capital is defined by its function. It is not a single entity, but a variety of different entities, having two characteristics in common: they all consist of some aspect of a social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of individuals who are within the structure’ (Coleman 1994: 302).

‘Social capital refers to the institutions, relationships, and norms that shape the quality and quantity of a society’s social interactions... Social capital is not just the sum of the institutions which underpin a society – it is the glue that holds them together’ (The World Bank 1999).

The key ingredients of the relationship in social capital are trust, mutuality and reciprocity. Social capital may be found in institutions and organizations, as well as in cognitive domains. It may have different forms and scope of coverage at micro, meso and macro levels of analysis.

The social work profession has always been involved in social capital building, but such involvement has not been given due recognition when the state plays the dominant role in providing care. Social capital may be seen as similar to other development concepts such as community development, community building and participatory development. However its emphasis in the quality of relationship among all networks concerned, and also its application in a wide range of sectors have given social capital a new meaning and guidance for practice.

The practice of building social capital and its measurement at field level has been documented by Grootaert and van Bastelaer (Eds, 2002), in the fields of agricultural and forestry, education, health and nutrition, microfinance, urban development, water sector.

Ans. 2: ‘Ethics’ is about matters of right and wrong conduct, good and bad qualities of character and responsibilities attached to relationships. Although the subject matter of ethics is often said to be human welfare, the bigger picture also includes the flourishing of animals and the whole ecosystem. The term ‘ethics’ may be used in a singular sense to refer to the study of right and wrong norms of behavior, good and bad qualities of character; or in a plural sense, to refer to the actual norms and qualities. Professional ethics concerns matters of right and wrong conduct, good and bad qualities of character and the professional responsibilities attached to relationships in a work context. Ethical awareness is fundamental to the professional practice of social workers. Their ability and commitment to act ethically is an essential aspect of the quality of the service offered to those who engage with social workers. Respect for human rights and a commitment to promoting social justice are at the core of social work practice throughout the world.

‘Values’ is often used to refer to one or all of religious, moral, cultural, political or ideological beliefs, principles, attitudes, opinions or preferences. In social work, ‘values’ can be regarded as particular types of beliefs that people hold about what is regarded as worthy or valuable. In the context of professional practice, the use of the term ‘belief’ reflects the status that values have as stronger than mere opinions or preferences. The term ‘social work values’ refers to a range of beliefs about what is regarded as worthy or valuable in a social work context (general beliefs about the nature of the good society, general principles about how to achieve this through actions, and the desirable qualities or character traits of professional practitioners).

Ans. 4 According to the Social Work Curriculum Study, “Social Work seeks to enhance the social functioning of individuals, singly and in groups, by activities focused upon their social relationships, which constitute the interaction between man and his environment. The activities can be grouped into three functions: restoration of impaired capacity, provision of individual and social resources and prevention of social dysfunction.” Hence, social work is a discipline, which

takes preventive and remedial action on problems in several areas of society. It helps families in economic or emotional difficulty. It works in medical and school situations. It seeks to correct the causes underlying delinquency and crime. The three functions of social work, restoration of impaired capacity, provision of individual and social resources and prevention of social dysfunction, are intertwined and interdependent.

Restoration can be curative or rehabilitative. Its curative aspects are to eliminate factors, which have caused breakdown of functioning, and its rehabilitative aspects are to organize and rebuild interactional patterns.

The underlying assumptions of social work in the context of corrections are:

- 1) Social Work, like all other professions, has problem solving functions and hence, it can help offenders in their treatment and rehabilitation.
- 2) Social Work practice is an art with a scientific and value foundation and, hence, correctional work is professional in nature.
- 3) Social Work as a profession came into being and continued to develop because it meets human needs and aspirations recognized by society. Hence, it assumes some of the socialization and control functions of society and helps the offenders to reshape their behavior.
- 4) Social Work practice takes its values from those held by the society of which it is a part. However, its values are not necessarily or altogether those universally or predominantly held or practiced in society and hence, it emphasizes in treatment and rehabilitation of the offender.

In correctional agencies, social workers may be known by such titles as classification officer, treatment worker, caseworker, group worker, diagnostic clinic worker, house master, etc. Among these, in the social treatment point of view, caseworker and group worker stand out prominently. It is characteristic of the social work task in the correctional setting that the worker may need to engage the administration in identifying needed services and in reformulating job description, so that the correctional setting may benefit from a fuller use of social work skills.

Social worker's specific main tasks/role in correctional setting is as follows:

- 1) Act as the officer of the court or other quasi-judicial body to investigate and report about the offender and his social situation, contributing the results of such social observations in an appropriate and meaningful way to the making of legal decisions.
- 2) Supervise the client's social activities in such a way that violations of the conditions of his status and his success in meeting conditions are perceived and can be reported
- 3) Help the involuntary client to handle the stress produced by the law enforcement and correctional process constructively- Modify his behavior in the direction of increasingly viable conformity with social expectations.
- 4) As the formal authority person in the delinquent or criminal's life, work with either authorities associated with the client (parents, teachers, employees, social agencies, institutional personnel) in such a way that:

- 5) Administer a case load or group load in such a way that: The social worker's decisions are appropriate and responsible. The decisions of other personnel in the administration of criminal justice are respected, implemented, and appropriately influenced by the social worker's knowledge. The necessities of legal and administrative deadlines are observed.
- 6) Enact a role in a multidiscipline agency involving shared decisions and teamwork obligations in partnership with: Personnel from other professions, Personnel in the same role as his, but with other educational backgrounds, Personnel with sub-professional assignments and backgrounds, Personnel from other agencies in the administration of criminal justice, Personnel in other agencies who have served the delinquent/criminal or will do so in the future.
- 7) Take a responsible part in the social change of the correctional institution and in the development of the field of service of the correctional institution, contributing from his professional knowledge and experience to the determination of policy.
- 8) Contribute to developing professional knowledge of social work in corrections.

Basically the tasks of the social worker in corrections include four particular aspects:

- Investigation for the purpose of securing information about the client's failure or success in meeting the obligations of his legal status.
- The use of controls to modify client's behavior.
- Acting as a legal authority in the client's life with responsibility for value change.
- Correctional decision making.

Ans. 5 Theories of Social Work

1. **Systems theories** – Those concepts that emphasize reciprocal relationships between the elements that constitute a whole. These concepts also emphasize the relationships among individuals, groups, organizations, or communities and mutually influencing factors in the environment. Systems theories focus on the interrelationships of elements in nature, encompassing physics, chemistry, biology, and social relationships (general systems theory, ecological perspective, life model, and ecosystems perspective).

2. Psychodynamic Theory –

- Psychodynamic psychotherapy is concerned with how internal processes such as needs, drives, and emotions motivate human behavior.
- Emotions have a central place in human behavior.
- Unconscious, as well as conscious mental activity serves as the motivating force in human behavior.
- Early childhood experiences are central in the patterning of an individual's emotions, and therefore, central to problems of living throughout life.
- Individuals may become overwhelmed by internal and/or external demands.

- Individuals frequently use ego defense mechanisms to avoid becoming overwhelmed by internal and/or external demands.

3. Social Learning Theory -

- Social learning theory suggests that human behavior is learned as individuals interact with their environment.
- Problem behavior is maintained by positive or negative reinforcement.
- Cognitive- behavioral therapy looks at what role thoughts play in maintaining the problem. Emphasis is on changing dysfunctional thoughts which influence behavior.
- Methods which stem from this theory are the gradual shaping of new behavior through positive and negative reinforcement, modeling, stress management: biofeedback, relaxation techniques, cognitive restructuring, imagery and systematic desensitization.

4. Conflict Theory –

- This theory draws attention to conflict, dominance, and oppression in social life.
- Groups and individuals try to advance their own interests over the interests of others.
- Power is unequally divided, and some social groups dominate others.
- Social order is based on the manipulation and control of non dominant groups by dominant groups.
- Lack of open conflict is a sign of exploitation.
- Social change is driven by conflict, with periods of change interrupting long periods of stability.

5. Developmental Theories: Developmental theories focus on how behavior changes and stays the same across the life cycle. Stage theories are usually characterized by the following:

- Human development occurs in clearly defined stages
- Each stage of life is qualitatively different from all other stages.
- Stages of development are sequential, with each stage building on earlier stages.
- Stages of development are universal.
- All environments provide the support necessary for development.

Ans.6 Perspectives of Social Work Research: In a very broad sense, social work research is the application of research methods to solve problems that social workers confront in the practice of social work. It provides information that can be taken into consideration by social workers prior to making decisions that affect their clients, programs or agencies such as use of alternative intervention techniques or change or modification of program/client/objectives and so forth.

Research and evaluation comprise a central feature of social work practice that can foster and appraise the profession's progress toward its mission (Wronka, 2008). Research and evaluation

are important because they give social workers permission to be curious and creative, as well as systematic and thorough in their activities that involve assessment, prevention, and intervention efforts with individuals, families, and communities.

Scientific perspectives and methods can provide a framework for practice activities and help obtain the best results possible. It is a way of thinking that offers strategies for action. Research is an essential tool toward building knowledge that can be used for practice. Research can serve as a generative tool to develop and refine theories for practice and can be used to evaluate practice effectiveness. When knowledge is empirically grounded, it strengthens practice decisions. research serves a practical function for social workers in the field, to evaluate their own practice with individuals, agencies, or communities. It is common for social workers to conduct needs assessment, quality assurance, program and practice evaluation, productivity studies, and program evaluation.

Data gathered for specific practice situations can be used to make practice decisions and actions. Following are some of the situations which call for application of social work research methods and techniques:

A social caseworker is interested in assessing the nature and extent of the problem of her client who has been facing marital maladjustment. She may be interested in obtaining information about the actual or potential effectiveness of the client. She may also be keen to know to what extent the intervention would be effective.

A group worker wishes to assess the extent to which the technique of role play is more or less effective than group discussion in increasing knowledge of drug abuse among school going children.

A community organizer wants to know the views of the community before he takes a decision to change the program objectives.

A social work administrator is concerned about effectiveness of implementation of new program launched

Ans. 7 Differentiate Voluntary and Professional Social Work:

Voluntary work could be extended to an individual too, but when it addresses the needs of a community at large, it is referred to as 'voluntary social work'.

Professional work instead implies all that is done for a profit and for admission of skill and core competency areas. The two spheres; professional and voluntary work, are different in the targets set. While the former is based on self motivation and profit, the latter have its foundations on selflessness and a larger cause. Nevertheless, today we see a merging of the two. Most individuals and companies now also actively address social issues while taking meticulousness of personal profit and recognition within the industry.

The professional and voluntary workers are both driven by the incessant urge to contribute positively to society, one on a personal basis and one in the community. Both the spheres of influence encompass humanity at large.

Well, both forms of social work include doing some sort of work that benefits the society. This could be anything from taking care of the elderly in old folks' homes, to work next to underprivileged school children and their families. Social work is all almost the society's values and principles and upholding them together in a community.

Professional social work is done by those who do it for a living, and usually follow the same 8-hour work day, or 40 hour work week calendar like other professionals in other fields of work. Professional social workers are required to be trained and qualified for the work they do surrounded by the community, such as teaching, etc. Professional social workers are paid, just approaching regular working people, for the job they do.

Voluntary social workers, on the other hand, usually work on an unpaid basis. They do similar work, and as a whole the work benefits society, but they don't normally treat the work as a 9 to 5 undertaking. Voluntary social workers are exactly what their title says: voluntary. They don't get paid for the work they do (they a short time ago do it out of their passion for social work), except many times they are paid for required living and food expenses while complete the work. They are also usually not required to be qualified to do the work which they are assigned, such as lecturer assistants, etc.

Voluntary social work is an association of people or a single person who is willing to work for the sake of other populace free of salary. He is not going to ask for money for whatever he is doing. He is helping out other needy inhabitants without taking any salary for it. This must be done by the will of the person of group who is intending to aid others for free. They should not ask money for this task. They should work dedicatedly. They should not think that they should not be loyal as they are not getting money for their work. Professional social work is to be done by organizations for money. They should cart money for whatever they are doing. They should not think that they are not going to have income for their work. They should also be loyal to their work but they are also money base. They should wait for hi-fi and attractive salaries. May be their system would be organized as they are paying for doesn't matter what they are doing, they are not taking anybody for free.

Ans. 8: Ethical principles of Social Work

Related to Human rights: *Principles*

1. **Upholding and promoting human dignity and well-being:** Social workers should respect, uphold and defend each person's physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual integrity and

well-being. They should work towards promoting the best interests of individuals and groups in society and the avoidance of harm.

2. **Respecting the right to self-determination:** Social workers should respect, promote and support people's dignity and right to make their own choices and decisions, irrespective of their values and life choices, provided this does not threaten the rights, safety and legitimate interests of others.

3. **Promoting the right to participation:** Social workers should promote the full involvement and participation of people using their services in ways that enable them to be empowered in all aspects of decisions and actions affecting their lives.

4. **Treating each person as a whole:** Social workers should be concerned with the whole person, within the family, community, societal and natural environments, and should seek to recognize all aspects of a person's life.

5. **Identifying and developing strengths:** Social workers should focus on the strengths of all individuals, groups and communities and thus promote their empowerment.

Related to Social Justice: *Principles*

1. **Challenging discrimination:** Social workers have a responsibility to challenge discrimination on the basis of characteristics such as ability, age, culture, gender or sex, marital status, socio-economic status, political opinions, skin color, racial or other physical characteristics, sexual orientation or spiritual beliefs.

2. **Recognizing diversity:** Social workers should recognize and respect the diversity of the societies in which they practice, taking into account individual, family, group and community differences.

3. **Distributing resources:** Social workers should ensure that resources at their disposal are distributed fairly, according to need.

4. **Challenging unjust policies and practices:** Social workers have a duty to bring to the attention of their employers, policy makers, politicians and the general public situations where resources are inadequate or where distribution of resources, policies and practice are oppressive, unfair, harmful or illegal.

5. **Working in solidarity:** Social workers, individually, collectively and with others have a duty to challenge social conditions that contribute to social exclusion, stigmatization or subjugation, and work towards an inclusive society.

Related to Professional Integrity: *Principles*

1. **Upholding the values and reputation of the profession:** Social workers should act at all times in accordance with the values and principles of the profession and ensure that their behavior does not bring the profession into disrepute.
2. **Being trustworthy:** Social workers should work in a way that is honest, reliable and open, clearly explaining their roles, interventions and decisions and not seeking to deceive or manipulate people who use their services, their colleagues or employers.
3. **Maintaining professional boundaries:** Social workers should establish appropriate boundaries in their relationships with service users and colleagues, and not abuse their position for personal benefit, financial gain or sexual exploitation.
4. **Making considered professional judgments:** Social workers should make judgments based on balanced and considered reasoning, maintaining awareness of the impact of their own values, prejudices and conflicts of interest on their practice and on other people.
5. **Being professionally accountable:** Social workers should be prepared to account for and justify their judgments and actions to people who use services, to employers and the general public.