Module 2
Historical Developments in Social Casework
Quadrant 1

1. Introduction

Tracing the historical developments of social case work not only facilitates an understanding of the emergence of social case work as a method of social work practice but also helps appreciate the roots of professional social work itself. This module provides information on the various developments that led to the emergence of social case work as a method of social work. It also presents an overview of social case work practice.

At the end of this module, the reader will

- Understand the major historical landmarks in the development of social case work
- Learn the considerable contributions made towards shaping social case work as a method of practice
- Develop awareness and appreciation of case work as a method of social work

2. Historical Developments of social case work

Social case work can be described as a professional method that aims to develop the social functioning of an individual in the most basic sense. It was one of the first 'methods' to be used in the profession of social work. From the early days of its inception, the fundamental idea of social case work was to help people in distress.

2.1 Early Developments in England & USA: Concept of Charity & Philanthropy:

Reaching out to those in need has always been the way of life in all societies of the ancient. This feeling of goodwill and humaneness was common among early church and philanthropists, who pooled in services to relieve the effects of poverty, console the poor, care for vulnerable groups like deprived children, the ailing and the elderly as well as correctional work with the delinquents. Orphanages and homes for the elderly were typical results of these activities. Charity was based on the principle criterion of worthiness in determining allocation of aids to those in need.

2.2. The dark Period in Europe

In the sixteenth century Plague or Black Death swept Europe and nearly $1/3^{rd}$ of the population was affected. Added to this, problems of famine, crop failure, ill health and war resulted- widows led to increased beggary. King Henry VIII in 1531 introduced the statutory law-prohibiting beggary and in 1536 Monasteries were closed aggravating beggary in Europe. However, the efforts of the government did not address the needs of those in despair but escalated the situation making conditions worse and pathetic for people living in poor socio-economic situations.

2.3 Elizabethan Poor Law

In 1558 Queen Elizabeth I came to the throne and enacted the Elizabethan Poor Law in 1601, which had its base on the concept of charity. The Poor law in the intention of sorting out services and to cater to the needs of those living in sub-standard conditions categorized people into:

- Able body poor
- Impotent poor
- Dependent children

The Law by itself was an important effort on part of the government to enlist categories of people in need of help and render services accordingly. The Law also marks an important landmark of reiterating the role & responsibilities of governments in framing policies to address the needs of its people. However, Administrative loop-holes and corruption led to the failure of the law, which was supposed to cater to the needs of the vulnerable group. The situation of the poor continued to be worse and flourishing charity & philanthropic groups sustained their best in providing relief services to the unfortunate.

2.4. Association for Improving the Conditions of the Poor (AICP)

Founded in 1843, the Association for improving the conditions of the poor, emphasized on self-respect, self-dependence and relief suitable to the needs of the people. It recognized that mere charity cannot solve problems of the less privileged. Dependency caused lack of self-respect, leading to enduring charity for the whole life. This was the beginning of professionalization of charity social work. The emphasis in the process of helping shifted from relief to understanding.

2.5. Developments during the late Nineteenth Century

The duty to help poor and needy people was expected to be the responsibility of local governments. The rapid increase in social maladies disabled the governments' ability in responding to the basic needs of the people. Individualized charity and philanthropic organizations were also not able to address the issue at large. As a response to this, the need of facilitating and coordinating services appropriately was felt and in the last quarter of the nineteenth century Charity Organization Society was established.

2.6. Charity Organization Society in England & USA

Charity Organisation Society was started in England in the year 1869. One of the key contributions of the COS to social work was its clear view of the cause of many social problems in England. London was beset with a 'mass of chronic pauperism, beggary and crime', behind which lay 'an appalling amount of genuine misfortune'.

In the late nineteenth century the influx of immigrants from Europe and England to America increased rapidly resulting in a gradual increase in the number of poor, sick and unemployed people. This in turn led to an inadequacy on part of the local governments to meet the basic needs such as shelter, money and food of these populations. Eight years after the COS was established in London the first city-wide Charity Organization was founded in the year 1877 in USA. By 1885, the number of Charity Organization Societies exceeded one hundred throughout the USA.

The organization was made up of charitable groups that used scientific philanthropy to help the poor, the troubled and deviant persons. They recognised themselves as more than alms givers. Their goal was to restore self-sufficiency and responsibility to the extent to which an individual could manage. They also operated as a central registration- involved in recording and relief

giving to people who were living in poverty   A scientific approach to social work was brought through the scientific philanthropic movement during the end of the nineteenth century. Scientific methodology was used not only to understand poverty and its ramifications on the individual, but also to do a systematic examination and treatment of individual cases

2.7. Ideology of Charity Organization Society (COS):

In the view of the COS, the existing services for the relief of poverty actually made matters worse, due to the inadequacy of the Poor Law combined with the counterproductive impact of the vast growth of charitable organisations. According to COS, this combination stripped people of the will to fight against the circumstances in which they found themselves; by not making any distinction between those who did and did not merit support. It was held that the system in effect encouraged all people to throw themselves onto the combined ministrations of the Poor Law and charity rather than maintain their independence. The COS maintained that this weakened the family and hence had a profoundly negative impact on society at large. To put this social theory into effect, the COS established systems and structures that enabled action in accordance with its principles. First and foremost, it insisted on proper coordination of charitable endeavour to avoid overlap and competition between organisations. To support this, an understanding was reached about the respective roles and purposes of the two arms of welfare: Charity and the Poor Law. Charity was to be the first port of call for people in need, with the Poor Law and its institutions functioning as a general safety net beneath the charitable institutions.

2.8. Organisational Structure & System of COS:

The next priority for the COS was to establish an organisational structure and a system to assist people who appeared to have some level of need. While the COS did not originally intend to provide charity directly, but rather to coordinate the charitable provision of other organisations, District Committees of the COS soon became established to provide relief on their own account. The critical task was to oversee a process whereby a judgement could be made concerning the eligibility of applicants for support. This was accomplished by judging whether an applicant was considered to be 'deserving' or 'undeserving' of assistance. It is in this process of investigation where the roots of social work practice can be clearly understood. If charity was to be properly directed, there needed to be a full, 'scientifically' organised examination of the circumstances of individuals and families who presented for a service. The basic techniques of 'casework' that the COS instigated have continued applicability till date.

2.9. Modus Operandi of Charity Organization Society:

In the late 1800s, voluntary members and officers of charity associations recognized themselves as a representative of that community. They went to their homes to have a closer look at the status of family and they tried to uncover their family ties and strengths. As a result of these family studies, the committee that represents that region's help activities was informed. And according to this report, the committee decided how to help the client to work self-sufficiently in the future. In these associations, the volunteers who reviewed the applications at their place and then reported to decision-makers were called "Friendly Visitors". However later, because of the increasing demand, the number of volunteers who have no education and no understanding of human behavior was not adequate. So some people began to do this job for a fee and were subsequently called 'Paid Agents'.

In 1895, towards the end of 19th century in England, a concept called 'Almoners' (outside visitors) came into existence. This was pioneered by Sir Charles Loch, who spent his life working to improve the welfare of the poor and the disadvantaged by lobbying and making contributions to welfare policy and legislation. He appointed almoners to assist the hospitals serve patients efficiently. Almoners were similar to friendly visitors and paid agents. These workers have been recognized as the first official representatives of the social work profession and the first practitioners of social case work.

Thomas Chalmers, a Scottish minister, professor of theology, political economist, leader of the Church of Scotland, and "Scotland's greatest nineteenth-century churchman" commented that official aid for the poor was inadequate and in order to fully help a poor person and his/her family, they should be subject to social rehabilitation. He insisted that the individuals be questioned through home visits and solutions to the problem discussed with the client and family members. This process started to gain interoperability with the scientific and professional social work practices

The process of investigation as termed by COS, 'taking down the case' involved a detailed assessment of the applicant's circumstances, requiring home visits. The COS issued guidance about how the process of 'taking down the case' should be organized. Following the assessment, a judgement was then to be made concerning an individual's eligibility to obtain a service. The COS did not simply dole out financial charity, but also sought to find creative ways of maintaining and enhancing people's independence. The influence of the COS on the development of social work was enormous; it successfully created the profession of social work, as well as defining many of its core tasks. During this period, social workers have concluded that the personal deficiencies and social factors were effective in the individual's becoming needy. Many significant values such as the importance of the uniqueness of a client, the need to deal with social problems at the individual and family level, the requisite of respect for the inherent right to decide for oneself, which reflect the essence of social work emerged and were made part of the social work philosophy. Please provide references where suitable and necessary.

2.10. Initiation of Training & Education

The COS recognised that effective work required a level of training of those people undertaking it. Indeed, one of its most significant legacies to social work was the development of systematic programmes of education and training for the role of the social worker. Towards the end of the 19th century the New York School of Philanthropy was established which engaged itself in providing the 'paid agents' assistance to get trained in the art of undertaking an investigation, arrive at a diagnosis and draw out a treatment plan for individual clients and families.

Implements of sufficient knowledge and skills to deliver the services to individuals and family are achieved only with education. The conference which was organized for the employees of charity associations in 1873 was the first step taken to realize this need. It was followed by a summer school in New York in 1898. Then, the first school of social work was opened in Amsterdam in 1899. In New York, a school of social work was opened in 1904. Its training period was one year. In 1917, its training period was doubled. As a result of all this, social work education with individual method was involved in the curriculum of the school as a separate subject.

2.11. Contributions of Mary Richmond

Mary Richmond for first time used the term "Case Work" to denote the process of working with individuals in the conference held for the employees of the charity associations. Following this in the year 1917, Mary Richmond wrote her first book called ' Social Diagnosis' which set forth a methodology of helping clients through systematic ways of assessing their problems and working with them. The book also gave an introduction to the principle of individualization and client's right to self-determination.

3. Other Impacts on the Development of Social Case Work

The impact of the two World Wars, establishment of juvenile courts, child guidance clinics, practices of medicine and psychiatry, formulations of sociological and psychological theories all played an important role in the refining process of social case work.

3.1 Impact of World War I

The First World War made a wide impact on social case work. During this period problems related to psychiatry was on the rise and gave scope for the practice of psychiatric social work. The contributions of Freud and his followers influenced the method employed by the caseworkers in dealing with the individuals.

3.2 Insights drawn in Medical Practice

The implementation of individual study at hospitals first occurred in Boston with the efforts of Dr. Cabot in 1905. Dr. Cabot encouraged social workers to visit patient's home in order to monitor the patient after being discharged; investigate the economic situation of the family, educate families on prevention, spread and recurrence of the disease. Previously, these issues were ignored and hence the social status of the patients and their families were neglected, too. The need for someone who can be in touch with the patients and their families to help them solve their problems was very much felt. In the same year, medical social work was made an official and essential part of the services offered by many hospitals in the USA.

3.3 Child Guidance Clinics (CGC):

In 1909, the first child guidance clinic was opened in Chicago. This service advanced in a short time and it revealed the necessity of a multi person treatment team which included psychiatrists, psychologists and social work practitioners. At that time, the function of the social worker in the treatment team was intended to report the parents' thoughts about the child's problems and their expectations of the treatment to the school, to inform the family about the causes of the child's incompatible behaviors and to clarify them how to change their relationship. In the beginning, these clinics were established to assist the juvenile courts but in time, children with behavioral disorders, students who fail in school, children who had eating problems, obesity and bladder control were added to the content of activities of these clinics. Thus the child guidance clinics catered to a wide range of issues found among children.

3.4 Contributions of Sociological & Psychological Theories

Sociological and psychological approaches began to affect the practices of social work with individual. Freud's psychoanalytic approach made a major impact in the development of method

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of social work with individual. Social work with individual diverged to psychiatric orientation and gained a therapeutic qualification. It was Mary Richmond who introduced the concepts of diagnosis/assessment, treatment/intervention and evaluation in social case work method and that gained a scientific identification. For the first time in this period, textbooks on case work were published.

3.5 The Period of Economic Depression

In 1930s due to the financial crisis in the USA, practices of social work with individual started to gain psycho-social nature. With the economic hardships of the First World War, the individuals' and families' mental health problems increased. Social workers attached to social welfare institutions were trying to respond to the needs of society with economic programs and social workers in clinics focused on the interpersonal relationship problems. Social case work entered a two-way development period. The first: the connection of social roles and with personality, relationship between the individual's psychological balance and social balance, dynamics that affect the family life and interactions in the family. Secondly, the concepts related to the self-psychology theory and defense mechanisms began to be used in practice for the first time.

Case workers had to consider the economic factors which were causing misery to persons, leading to emotional distress and breakdown. The focus shifted from individual to modification and change of the person's environment to enable him/her to adapt to his/her situations satisfactorily. With the psycho-social approach that developed during 1930-1940, social workers started to care about not only the individual but also his/her relationship with the family and society. Also, they started to learn about the social, economic, psychological and cultural factors that affected the individual and thus they added a new dimension to their applications.

3.6 World War II

The residual impact of World War II necessitated the use of the framework of social sciences . The War gave rise to an increase in the personal problems faced by individuals . This in turn meant that the scope of social work had to be extended so that it could reach out to more individuals.

3.7 Era of private practice

After 1950s, the era of private practice started. Professional agencies offering social service to the needy started growing and case work was used as a methodology of entering into the community. Richmond (1922), Hamilton (1951) and Perlman (1957) also emphasized the problems of social functioning. Pl add a couple of sentences explaining some of these problems.

After the 1960s, social case work was influenced by different approaches with the variety of individual and social problems. The effectiveness of psychoanalytic and previous approaches in solution of the problems was discussed and for more effective solutions, in these years, a holistic approach has prevailed in applications of social case work. In the 1980s, in the USA and Europe, a generalist social work application was approved in school of social work curriculum.

Today, the demand is to train social workers who are multi-perspective and have the skills as well as the ability to use all the methods of social work as and when required, are able to work

with different levels of formal systems such as individuals, families, group, community, society at the same time, on the basis of social justice and human rights. (Maybe you could rewrite this in bullet points so that it is easier for the students?

4. Social Case work in India

American case work had its influence in India, as the first professional social workers who did case work in the Indian setting were trained in American Schools of Social work. Please add a sentence to link this with the points detailed below.

4.1. Social Service League

N.M. Joshi, one of the founders of the Trade Union Movement established an organization called the Social Service League in the year 1911. The League organised training programmes for volunteers, whose services were later utilized for different types of relief, rehabilitation and assistance for the poor and the destitute.

4.2. Dr. Clifford Mandshart and Sir Doarbji Tata Trust

In the year 1936, Dr. Clifford Mandshart had a vision of a post graduate school of social work of national stature that would engage in a continuous study of Indian social issues and problems and impart education in social work to meet the emerging need for trained human power. Dr. Clifford Mandshart influenced the trustees of the Sir Drobji Tata Trust, to start a full time career oriented, educational programme in social work. This subsequently influenced the direction of social work education and social research in India. In 1944 the school was renamed as The Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS).

In 1946, case work figured, both as a theoretical course and also as a method of practice in the academic programme. Since then, a lot of foundational perspectives and thoughts has enlarged and enriched Social work as a profession. The addition of indigenous theoretical knowledge base has strengthened social work as an academic programme.

5. Summary:

- Being the first method of social work, social case work basically targets at working with individuals and aims to help individuals' decode their problems, solve them and fulfill their social functions.
- In order to achieve this goal, social case work benefits from different approaches, methods and techniques. Social work with individual took the mission of helping the poor first and sociological approaches reoriented the application methodology. Starting from a scientific Philanthropy, social case work emerged to become an organized effort to reach out those in need.
- From the First World War until the1930s, casework was mainly influenced by the upcoming psychological views. During 1930s until 1960s, the psycho-social approaches dominated social case work applications.
- From the 1960s up to our present day, professionals use the holistic or multi-perspective approaches to solve the new and complex problems that occur as a result of rapid changes in social life. Theoretical knowledge transferred from various disciplines is used to identify and solve the problems.

- From the second half of the 20th century, rapid advances in behavioral sciences and social sciences affected social case work method. Social case work began to be called as social work with individual in the literature.
- Generalist practice models gained importance in social work training. The application of one-by-one method was gradually declining in practice. Social workers had the point of view to use all the methods at the same time for solving the individual's problems. In the work with the individuals, social workers used social work with individual at micro-level, social work with group at mezzo-level and community work at macro-level.