



**DIPLOMA IN SOCIAL WORK AND  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

**SOCIAL WORK THEORY AND  
PRACTICE**



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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL WORK

### Specific Objectives

By the end of this topic the trainee should be able to;

- a) Explain the meaning of social work
- b) Discuss the areas of social work practice
- c) Discuss the role of social worker in identified areas
- d) Describe historical background of social work
- e) Discuss the importance of social in the society
- f) Discuss the scope of social work
- g) Discuss the factors that contribute to the need for social work in developing countries.

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Meaning of Social Work

What is Social Work? It is a service profession. It is defined as professional service based on professional skills and which assist individual alone or groups to obtain social or personal satisfaction.

Mitchelle (1965) defined social work as an activity by an individual which aims at enhancing improving or developing of an individual or a community through collection or personal activity.

According to United Nation as report (1959), social work is any activity by an individual which may result from the mutual adjustment between individual and prevailing environment. Social work helps people to adjust to changing circumstances like stressful catastrophes / situations which cannot be altered.

#### Missions

Social work mission is:

- To help people adjust to normal life from stressful situations
- To ensure equal treatment of people
- To ensure a particular people community are not marginalized in terms of service provision or resource allocation.
- To ensure people are sensitized on how to handle problems facing them and emerging difficulties.

Social work is seen as a technical management of personal management and maintenance of order; hence social work deals with the individual problems first and latter deals with the situational problems, therefore social needs to:

- a. Have experience on how to relate and work with people
- b. Have knowledge about community resources
- c. Have knowledge on how to mobilize the resources

### **Who is a social worker?**

Is a person skilled at understanding in helping groups or community experiencing situation of stress and starting which they can't meet themselves, hence they are cause managers.

Social worker thus has an acting capacity of a professional hence;

- It has a council which validates monitors the counseling and training courses
- It has its own influential association
- It has its own qualification association to those who have finished training
- It has a code of ethics and conduct
- It has its own methodology (way of doing its own things)
- It has its own concepts (terms and conditions)
- It's founded on humanitarian philosophies theories
- It is based on scientific knowledge and skills

### **1.2 Areas of Social Work Practice**

Social work are involved in areas whereby there is;

- a. Addressing poverty issues
- b. Social prevention and protection of people against diseases e.g. HIV/ AIDS
- c. Child issues e.g. child day care services, child rights
- d. Social justices e.g. court proceedings
- e. Rehabilitation programmes e.g. prison department and probation services
- f. Promote environmental conservations
- g. Employment and unemployment
- h. Discourage drug abuse and addiction e.g. alcoholism
- i. Foster moral values
- j. Promote strong family foundations by offering counseling services, extra marital sex
- k. Undertake research activities
- l. Promote social welfare services in education and health
- m. Discourage violation of women rights
- n. Influence mass media
- o. Discourage corruption
- p. Loud police brutality
- q. Social disorders in the society e.g. rape

## 1.3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF SOCIAL WORK

### **Evaluation of Social work in Developed Countries**

Social work has been described as the newest profession. It was born in the slums of London in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and has existed in many countries up to the twenty first century. During the agrarian revolution and industrial revolution many problems arose which led to the giving birth of the social workers or the community workers who were needed to help people by giving counseling programmes and advice.

After along time of service providence the social work was established and an institution whereby people interested with charity and service providences were encouraged to educate themselves as professional in social work school.

After long period of time social work has developed as a profession which with time has also been developed in many countries. The aim was to alleviate problem for people suffering.

### **Evolution of Social Work in Kenya**

The need for social work began after independence leading to the establishment of the social work institute. In 1963 the institute was started called (Kenya - Israel) school of social work in Machakos under Kenya social services and Kenya administration school in Embu.

It was started as a government policy to train persons with familiar problems to help solve individual, group and community problem in solving their economic and social welfare.

The aim of the school was to train persons to have social knowledge on human problems. To train people with the knowledge in acceptance, principles of social work and to sensitized people on how to identify their needs. In 1976 the department of social work was established at the University of Nairobi to train a high caliber personnel who were not trained at the Kenya school of administration in Embu.

This establishment laid a foundation for the present existing social work in Kenya. Today the social work profession is identified with the social services department which is found in every district administering social services to the people under the ministry of home affairs

### **The Scope of Social Work**

Social work deals with the provision of social services to clients in social institution. The work is to better their skills so that people can function more effectively. They must understand the individual dealing with the environment because social problems are a combination of individuals and their interaction with their environment Social workers try to find solutions to the prevailing circumstances or difficulties that people face in their social environment. Social workers then come up with solutions to the social problems of the clients in so doing they use various methodologies like case methodology social group work and community work, in addition social workers use various models of

- a. Eradication of misery - it helps people in the community to come in terms with stressful phenomena e.g. famine, disaster e.t.c.
- b. Help the society to identify their problems through the problem solving model
- c. Research undertaking on societal problems
- d. Rehabilitation e.g. prison warders and probation workers
- e. Resource mobilization
- f. Knowledge and skills on the available resources e.g. self help group
- g. Education e.g. issues of human rights
- h. Sensitization functions i.e. make people aware of some issues e.g. HIV/AIDS
- i. Counseling
- j. Legal enforcement , they protect vulnerable group in the societies
  
- k. Socialization function - help people to adopt to new ways of life
- l. Career development - source of employment as a profession

### **Qualities of a Social Worker**

Should portray the following characteristics:

- Should be patient
- Should respect himself and his clients
- Should be sympathetic but not emotional
- Should be honest
- Should be truthful
- Should be committed and diligent
- Should be confidential
- Should be transparent and non manipulative

### **Factors That Contribute To the Need of Social Work in Developing Countries**

#### **The increasing poverty level**

Most less developed countries need social workers and their services to check the increasing misery and raise the standard of living of its people.

#### **To stamp out ignorance**

People attitude need to be changed to reflect the current emerging trends and problems of the society. Social workers undertake this role through educating and enlighten of people in the society

#### **The need for extensional social services**

Social work is involved in profession of essential services aimed at improving the wellbeing of the people as group members of family or as a community e.g. awareness programme on protection and prevention of HIV/ AIDS, the need to promote social justice

Social workers discourage discrimination and unequal distribution of resources based on tribal, religious, race and other malpractices.

### **The need to address environmental issues**

The increasing adoption of modern technology by developed countries in agricultural and production industries has harmful effects on water, land and air in terms of pollution which is addressed by social workers.

### **The need to curb unemployment**

Most developed countries are characterized by increasing and alarming rate of unemployment of youth and workforce with increasing preferences of skilled labour force.

To addressing the increasing state of insecurity and domestic violence

Due to increasing insecurities in urban centers and the devastating rates of domestic violence in rural areas there is need for social workers

### **Provision of training**

As a result of increasing network in the society, social workers are essential in training the people on emerging issues like HIV/AIDS and prevention.

### **Stream lining of Social Welfare**

Through social work entrenchment in government ministries, the provision of social welfare like housing, health security among others will be effective and efficient in developing countries.

### **Checking of increasing stress**

Social workers help people to come in terms with problem e.g. social workers in hospitals assist patients of stress on how to manage stress.

### **Conflict resolution**

Through the use of social work methods such as case work, group work and community work, they bring harmony in the community in terms of conflicts such as religious clashes.

### **Promotion of social order**

They uphold order by stressing the respect of social work and response to the principles of social work.

Social workers encourage the identification and exploitation of available resources

Through the problem solving process they are able to identify the available resources on how the community members can best utilize them in solving their problems

### **Respect of human rights**

They act as watchdogs of the government and other leaders and discourage violation of human rights by police

### **Promotion of development**

Through their activities such as training research and application of theory, they help countries to realize their development goals. This is attained for instance through better management and skills in running the countries affairs.

## **REVISION QUESTIONS**

1. explain the applicable of social work learning theory
2. discuss the importance of social work theories
3. as a social worker explain the application of functionalist theory in relevant life situations

4. explain how social workers can apply “social learning theory” to help deviant peers in the society

## CHAPTER TWO

# THEORIES APPLICATION IN SOCIAL WORK

### Specific Objectives

By the end of this topic the trainee should be able to;

- a) discuss the theories applicable in social work
- b) discuss the importance of social work theories
- c) apply the theories of social work in the relevant field life situation

### INTRODUCTION

#### 2.1 Theories Applicable in Social Work

Social workers utilize in their daily activities in the society in explaining, identifying and describing the causes and effect of problems. Theorizing is a mental activity to formulate ideas to explain why events occur the way they do. Therefore a theory is a statement of ideas to explain why events happen the way they do.

A theory is an integrated set of relations between concepts which has a certain level of validity i.e. it represents a related set of ideas useful in explaining social phenomena and actions. A theory is any abstract general account of any area that involves formulation.

#### Characteristics of Theory

- Theories consist of statements couched in terms of exactly defined concept statement of well defined concepts.
- The characteristics include:
  - Statement or proposition much be consistent with each other
  - Generalization must be derived from the proposition
  - Theories should be derived from the propositions
  - Theories should be fruitful and show the way to further observation therefore increasing knowledge
  - Theories should be creative
  - Theories are subject to verification
  - Theories should offer for criticism



### **a) Psycho - Analytic Theory**

The psychoanalytic conception of human beings was developed by **Sigmund Freud (1856 - 1939)** an Australian psychologist. His studies on psycho analysis are not base on experience studies but brave influence or sociological development. The basic assumption of his theory is that much of human behavior id determined by unconscious biological instinct (inborn drives and traits) that are universal. He presented three level of personality, this includes:

- ❖ The conscious level
- ❖ The pre - conscious level
- ❖ The unconscious level

#### **The conscious level**

It includes all actions and experiences of human beings at any level. According to Freud only a small part of mental life is contained in the state of unconsciousness hence the conscious represent a small and limited aspect of personality.

#### **Pre - conscious level**

Experiences that are not conscious at the moment but which can be surrounded readily into awareness spontaneously in with little effort e.g. memories of what one did last month , the address of the school one attended or what one did during valentine. According to Freud, the pre-conscious level as it represents human personality.

#### **The unconscious part of human mind**

This is the deepest major part of human personality. He strongly believed that human behaviors are directed by this part. Human mind is divided. It has impulses and drives outside the realm of human personality.

Analysis of human development and personality, he categorized human personality into three;

**Id** - is the innate drive it is the instincts selfish part of human personality. The Id seeks immediate pleasures / gratification. This part is the seldom reason.

#### **Ego**

Unlike the Id, ego employs learning, thinking, responding and decision making. Ego controls thinking and reasoning activities and guides the Id not to act foolishly. It expresses the desires of Id in accordance to realities.

#### **The super Ego**

We meant is the social part of human personality and direct human beings to act according to societal norms, ethics and values.

It ensures that human beings act to standard behavior accepted by all. It directs the activities of the Id and Ego to societal norms. It makes people respect rules and regulations in their undertaking or anything they do. The Ego satisfies the demands of the Id in a reasonable manner approved by the super ego.

All work in harmony to make human being a totally complete person. Freud denied the process of learning and socialization as determining human behavior and laid more emphasis on the conscious frame of human mind.

#### **Criticism**

- ❖ Not all behavior is biologically determined but learned e.g. through rules and regulations e.g. in church
- ❖ It dwelled much on action rather than the cause of action

### **b) Social Learning Theory**

This theory is associated with proponents like John Locks, Pavlor among others. The theory rejects the notion of biological explanation of human behavior and regard behavior as a learnt phenomenon. How socialization occurs is that we are socialized through positive and negative enforcement by friends, parents, friends and society and that we observe and imitate socialized behavior around us.

This theory is important because it helps in understanding the behavior and influencing of each other e.g. in groups, by peers or colleagues. The basic assumption of this theory is that human behavior is learnt during interaction with others and environment but it doesn't deny the preserve of other process like emotions and thoughts. According to philosopher John Lockers human beings are born tabular raiser thus totally a blank slate of mind that is filled by interaction by not only the environment but also socialization with peers, whatever is filled is what later translates into human personality. According to theory human beings learn behavior through imitation observation, instruction and through experience.

The two process emphasized in social learning theory are;

- a. Pavlorian conditioning / respondent learning
- b. Observation / operant behaviors

#### **a) Conditioning/ respondent learning**

(Wiggins, Wiggins and Vander Zenden 1994), conditioning is a form of learning in which in the consequences of behavior determine the probability of its future occurrence consequence of behavior that increase the chance that a behavior will occur as reinforcement, consequences that reduce the probability are punishments. This is learnt though prior can for instance respond the mean when one is hungry. This response can be condition response e.g. Pavlorian or unconditional response e.g. feeling, thirsty, sleepy and hungry.

#### **b) Observation learning / operant behaviors**

Also referred to occurs when people reproduce the response they observe in other people, either real or fictional. This theory can be used to explain behaviors like drug abuse smoking the use of language and dress code.

#### **Criticism**