

IMPACT OF SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION TOWARDS CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT

Children hold a particularly special place in society. When it comes to social, economic, cultural, and civil and political rights, children are particularly vulnerable. The goal of the worldwide, regional, and national tools and mechanisms pertaining to the child protection system is to advance child welfare services. In light of this, social work is both a practice-based profession and an academic field that supports social growth, cohesiveness, and individual and community empowerment via the application of the principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility, and respect for diversity. Has important responsibilities when it comes to tackling issues with child protection in society. This study examined the social work profession's contributions to the provision of effective services for child protection and was named "Social work profession as effective strategy to effective services delivery. Many strategies, including case management, crisis intervention, advocacy and empowerment, prevention and education, family-based intervention, out-of-home care, collaborative partnerships, and assessment and intervention, have been described. Additionally, the study uses secondary techniques to gather data from a variety of reliable sources. The study concluded that integrating social work profession in non-governmental and governmental organisation would positively be impactful to child protection system.

Keywords: Child, child protection, social work

1. INTRODUCTION

Since children represent the country's future labour force, it is critical that their wellbeing be given the utmost priority (Aggarwal, 2014).

They are an important component of every society. They make up about 40–50% of the population in many developing civilizations. The development inputs given to this sector of society have a significant impact on the social and economic advancement of a nation. (Siddiqui, 2022).

The next generation of human resources in the country are its children. Hence, funding child development is an investment in the future and raising the standard of living in the country. Early childhood is a highly vulnerable time that calls for a well-planned program for the child's survival, development, and progress. Inadequacies at this point may result in a lifelong delay in both mental and physical development. Because children lack a political voice and a constituency, adults have a higher need to plan for the development of children.

There are some prominent international efforts for children such universal declaration of human rights (1948) international covenant on civil and political rights (1966) international covenant on economics, social and cultural rights (1966) united nations convention on the rights of the child (1989)

The 1990 global declaration on the survival, protection, and development of children outlined the difficulties and responsibilities and emphasized the necessity of top-level political action for children's welfare. The primary goals and targets for child survival, protection, and development were also prepared in the 1990s as part of an action plan meant to serve as a guide for governments implementing the declaration. (Sharma, 2013). Furthermore, the adoption of the eight Millennium Development Goals between September 2000 and September 2015 brought to beneficial advances in the field of global child care and protection. The current 2023 agenda for sustainable development, which includes 17 goals and was approved by all United Nation (UN) member states in 2015, has addressed several significant issues related to child care and protection more especially goals number 2,3,4 and 5.

Children face a variety of obstacles related to human rights violations in the areas of civil and political rights, social, economic, and cultural rights, even with the aforementioned commitment to pluralism efforts from international, regional, and national communities. For services to be delivered effectively, the child protection system and the social work profession's professional support are required.

The goal of child protection is to shield kids from risks that could endanger their lives or their childhood. It is important to acknowledge children's vulnerability and take steps to lessen it by shielding them from damage and dangerous circumstances. The goal of child protection is to give kids a safety net they can rely on.

This means that the system has an obligation to give the kids the care and rehabilitation they need to reintegrate into society and to take appropriate preventive action if they end up becoming victims of crimes or becoming entangled in the bad habits of the community (Tushar Shukla, V. And Kumar 2019:699-700).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Children are subjected to subtle types of abuse, exploitation, and violence. It occurs everywhere, including in homes, schools, and communities—the settings where kids ought to be the most safeguarded. Child abuse can take the form of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse.

Furthermore, children suffer a great deal at the hands of individuals they trust.

Children are particularly at risk when working in humanitarian situations. Children may be compelled to leave their homes during times of armed war, natural disasters, and other calamities. Some may be separated from their families and may encounter abuse and exploitation along the road. They run the risk of becoming hurt or killed. They might be enlisted by armed organizations. Gender-based violence poses a serious hazard, particularly to women and girls.

Another serious issue that exists in many regions of the world is harmful cultural behaviors. Despite the fact that both female genital mutilation and child marriage are widely acknowledged as abuses of human rights, hundreds of millions of girls have been subjected to both.

Every child has the right to be shielded from violence regardless of the situation. From birth, child protection systems serve as a bridge to essential social services and just legal institutions. They offer care to those who are most in need, such as children who have been displaced due to violence or natural disasters, victims of child labour or human trafficking, people with impairments, and those receiving alternative care. Preserving children's physical and psychosocial needs is essential to securing their futures.

Harmful cultural habits are another major problem that exists in many parts of the world. Even though child marriage and female genital mutilation are both universally recognized as violations of human rights, hundreds of millions of girls have been exposed to both. No matter what the circumstances, every child has the right to be protected against violence. Child protection systems act as a link between fundamental social services and fair legal systems from the moment of birth. They provide care to the most vulnerable, including children displaced by natural disasters or acts of violence, victims of child labour or human trafficking, those with disabilities, and those receiving alternative forms of care. Ensuring children's futures requires preserving their physical and emotional requirements.

2. RESEARCH QUESTION

What does child protection imply, exactly? What does child protection intervention through multidimensional social work entail?

Is the field of social work essential to providing child protection services in an efficient manner?

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study has the following objective

- To examine the child protection system
- To explore the significance of social work in child protection services delivery
- To examine multifaceted social work intervention towards child protection

3. METHODOLOGY

The method of data collection for this study is secondary sources, such as data collected from various international organisations such as united nations international children's emergency fund(UNICEF) as well as library archive, journals etc

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

WHO IS A CHILD

A child denotes developmental stage and/or/legal status. The United Nations convention on the rights of the child defines it thus: `A child means every human being below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier`

CHILD PROTECTION

Child protection is about keeping children safe from a risk or preserved risk to their lives or childhood.it is about recognizing that children are vulnerable and hence reducing their vulnerability by protecting them from harm and harmful situations. Child protection is about ensuring that children have a security net to depend upon.

This means, if they happen to get trapped in the ill practices of the society or fall as victims of crimes, the system has the responsibility to provide the children with the necessary care and rehabilitation to bring them back into the mainstream and also to take adequate preventive measures (tushar Shukla, V.And Kumar 2019:699-700)

SOCIAL WORK

Social work means helping profession that uses knowledge and skills developed from social science and environment to; prevent, remediate and resolves social problems affecting individual, group and communities to enhance the quality of life, social functioning and bring out social development

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM

Child protection systems are a set of services, usually government-run, designed to protect children and young people who are underage and to encourage family stability. UNICEF defines a 'child protection system' as:

"The set of laws, policies, regulations and services needed across all social sectors – especially social welfare, education, health, security and justice – to support prevention and response to protection-related risks. These systems are part of social protection, and extend beyond it. At the level of prevention, their aim includes supporting and strengthening families to reduce social exclusion, and to lower the risk of separation, violence and exploitation. Responsibilities are often spread across government agencies, with services delivered by local authorities, non-State providers, and community groups, making coordination between sectors and levels, including routine referral systems etc., a necessary component of effective child protection systems." —United Nations Economic and Social Council (2008), UNICEF Child Protection Strategy, E/ICEF/2008/5/Rev.1, par

GOALS OF CHILD PROTECTION

Ensuring that all children are safe and free from harm or danger is the main objective of child protection. (Barth, 1999) By developing procedures and policies that recognize hazards and take action before they cause harm, child protection also aims to stop future harm from happening. According to studies, child protection services should be offered holistically in order to meet these objectives .(Holland 2004) This entails accounting for the various social, cultural, psychological, economic, and environmental elements that may raise a child's or family's risk of damage. It need cooperation between several disciplines and sectors to provide a thorough safety and support network for kids.(Fred and others, 2016) It is the duty of individuals, institutions, and governments to guarantee that children's rights are upheld and that they are kept safe from harm.(Katherine, Howe and Brian 2010) This entails giving kids a secure atmosphere in which to mature and thrive, shielding them from mental, physical, and sexual abuse, and making sure they have access to resources for basic necessities like food, shelter, and medical care.(2024, UNICEF)

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES TOWARDS CHILD PROTECTION

It's critical that kids reach their full potential. The government must provide kids the chance to develop to their full potential. Every country in the world is attempting to unite for the protection of children (Tushar Shukla, and Kumar, 2019). Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states, in paragraph 2, that children have the right to special care and assistance. The aforementioned idea was included in the declaration of rights for children, which was approved by the general assembly on November 20, 1959, together with other universal declarations pertaining to children. Child care was covered by paragraphs 23 and 24 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and article 10 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. Within The child should grow up in a family setting, in an atmosphere of happiness, love, and understanding, according to a number of other publications. Despite this, the state was not bound by the principles. Consequently, it became apparent that a convention that ought to have legal force among states was being drafted.

On November 20, 1989, the general assembly unanimously adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which went into effect on September 2, 1990. This marked the 30th anniversary of the 1949 declaration .There are 116 state parties to the convention as of February 18, 2020.Thus, for the protection of children's civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights, the CRC is the first legally enforceable agreement on a global scale. Following the convention's conclusion, children's rights became active subjects. In actuality, the CRC gave children a bill of rights. According to article 1 of the convention, a child is any person under the age of eighteen, unless their legal system allows them to reach majority earlier. (Agarwal, 2022).

MULTIFACETED SOCIAL WORK APPROACHES TOWARDS CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM

The field of social work is wide and has connections to many other academic fields. The following definitions are provided by social work organizations: In addition to being a practice-based profession, social work is an academic field that supports societal development, cohesion, and individual liberty and empowerment. Social work is based on

the fundamental values of social justice, human rights, group responsibility, and respect for diversity. In order to solve life's issues and improve well-being, social work engages people and structures, drawing on theories from the social sciences, humanities, and indigenous wisdom. (IFSW, 2014)

Social workers assist individuals and families in achieving better life outcomes. This could include assisting those who are vulnerable to abuse or violence or assisting those who want to live independently. Social workers provide assistance, represent their clients' interests, and point them toward any resources they might need. Social workers frequently collaborate with educators and health care providers in multidisciplinary teams. (NASW, 2024)

In order to improve people's individual and communal well-being, social workers work with families, communities, and individuals. Its goal is to support individuals in honing their abilities and their capacity to solve challenges by utilizing both personal and communal resources.

In addition to more general societal challenges including poverty, unemployment, and domestic abuse, social work also addresses personal and individual problems (CASW, 2024).

The public welfare system is in charge of child protection services. It involves looking into reports of abuse against children, including neglect in the physical, sexual, and educational domains as well as emotional, physical, and medical abuse. Programs for family and preventive may be offered by private organizations. Then when children are too vulnerable to abuse to stay in their own families, foster care is used.

It is seen as a stopgap measure until the risk is eliminated, parental rights are revoked, and a long-term strategy is put into place. In the event that family reunification is not feasible, adoption services, including international, domestic, and specialized adoption, are typically sought after as part of permanent planning. (Strup, 2017)

A comprehensive inquiry is the first step towards good practice in CPS. Preserving the family unit, if feasible, is just as important as protecting the child from harm. It is in their best long-term interests to have parents who can support them. If required, removal from the household should be done as a last resort to keep the child safe. The employee evaluates the circumstances and the possibility of abuse. To support evaluation, a number of inventories and structured interview formats have been created. In general, the risk is decreased with greater cooperation from the parent or guardian. Poverty, criminality, and substance addiction are linked to increased risk. Risk assessments for sexual abuse appear to be more challenging, and usually, separation from the person who is committing the offense. In the majority of these situations, a protective reaction by the non-offending parent or guardian reduces the risk. (Johnson, 2015)

Different therapy approaches have varying degrees of success; some emphasize the parent while others use a family system approach. Although it is frequently provided by private organizations, treatment may be given inside the public welfare system. Most of the time, the goal is to reduce risk factors. Whenever there is substance misuse, a thorough treatment program is necessary.

Risk can be decreased by taking parenting programs and enhancing the family's financial situation. In addition to counselling, substance abuse treatment, and parenting training, social workers can serve as case managers to guarantee the efficient use of resources. When parents acknowledge their child's abuse and take action to lessen the risk, the risk is lowered. (Stephen, 2022)

A variety of models can be applied to child protective services in an ethical manner. The government mandates that family preservation models be used as the primary options for child protection services. For any kind of family preservation or reunification endeavour, a strengths approach is essential. Crisis intervention is crucial in terms of parents and kids. Particularly while taking kids out of the house. The younger kids may benefit from behaviour treatment to help them get acclimated to being in foster care.

Depending on the requirements and preferences of the parent and the kid, the cognitive-behavioural, communication, mediation, problem solving, solution-focused, or task models may be used with older children and parents. For all instances, case management is necessary to guarantee service and resource access. (Johnson and Yanca.2022)

Working with Child protection services might be dangerous for the employee; in certain cases, especially while taking children from their homes, team police protection may be required.

Employees should check in with the office on a frequent basis, use their cell phones, and have a location-tracking system. The presence of drugs, alcohol, or criminal activity in the neighbourhood increases the risk, and in a rural area, distance and isolation make it more difficult for law enforcement to respond to emergencies. (Alexander and Curtis2000)

Social work practice consists of the professional application of social principles, and techniques to one or more of the following ends: helping people obtain tangible services; counselling and psychotherapy with individuals, families, and groups; helping communities or groups provide or improve social and health services, and participating in legislative

processes. The practice of social work requires knowledge of human development and behaviour; of social and economic, and cultural institutions; and the interaction of all these factors.

5. ASSESSMENT AND INTERVENTION

Assessment and intervention Is the result of and a process of knowing that forms the basis of action. It involves gathering and evaluating data, as well as piecing together existing facts to produce meaning (Max Siporin 1975:2019).

Social workers thoroughly assess children's needs and situations in order to assess risks, strengths, and protective factors. By developing and putting into action individualized intervention plans that are tailored to each child's unique needs and circumstances, they organize resources and supports to satisfy each child's short- and long-term requirements.

CASE MANAGEMENT

The field of child welfare has found case management to be beneficial, and it has garnered significant attention as a coordinated strategy to service delivery (Johnson and Stephen 2015). In their role as case managers, social workers oversee the delivery of services and supports to children and families, manage interdisciplinary teams, and monitor progress made toward pre-set goals. By defending children's rights and interests, they ensure that children's needs are met and that their voices are heard within the child welfare system.

CRISIS INTERVENTION

Crisis intervention is a method that views a crisis as a chance to turn things around because many individuals are more receptive to help during such times, even while it acknowledges that problems can get worse and concentrates on giving immediate relief. (In 2018, John Harris and Vicky White 2018) Social workers assist children and families in times of acute risk or crisis by offering crisis intervention and emergency response services. They cooperate with law enforcement, child protection organizations, and other relevant parties to guarantee children's safety and welfare and to make it easier for them to obtain resources and supportive services.

ADVOCACY AND EMPOWERMENT

Enhancing people's lives, easing bio psychosocial issues, empowering people and communities, and achieving social justice are among social work's ultimate objectives.(Charles Zastrow, 1990)

Social workers support children who require care and protection by encouraging them to express their choices and participate in decision-making processes. They stand up for these kids' interests and rights. They strive to guarantee that children's rights are respected, their needs are prioritized, and their voices are heard within the child welfare system.

PREVENTION AND EDUCATION

In order to increase public awareness of child abuse, neglect, and exploitation, encourage good parenting techniques, and fortify protective elements within families and communities, social workers participate in preventative efforts and community education programs. They give families information and assistance in an effort to stop child abuse from happening again and to encourage positive outcomes for the kids.

Social workers use a variety of intervention strategies to address the unique needs and situations of children who require care and protection. These methods could consist of:

FAMILY-BASED INTERVENTIONS:

The goal of the profession of social work is to improve the well-being of individuals, families, groups, and communities on an individual and group level. Its goal is to support individuals in honing their abilities and their capacity to solve challenges by utilizing both personal and communal resources. Along with more general socioeconomic challenges like poverty, unemployment, and domestic abuse, social work also addresses personal and individual difficulties.(CASW 2024)

Family- based intervention aims to improve parenting abilities, fortify families, and deal with underlying problems like substance addiction, mental illness, or domestic violence. The aforementioned actions seek to maintain the cohesiveness of the family, avert placement away from home, and facilitate reunions where feasible

7.OUT-OF-HOME CARE:

For kids and teenagers who can't live with their parents, out-of-home care offers alternate housing. Children receiving out-of-home care are typically also covered by a care and protection order.(2024)

Social workers build up residential treatment programs, foster care programs, and kinship care programs for kids who can't stay with their families safely due to abuse or neglect risks. They ensure that children entrusted to out-of-home care receive the right kind of direction, support, and resources to meet their needs and improve their overall wellbeing.

8. TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE:

A paradigm known as trauma-informed care (TIC) or trauma-and violence-informed care (TVIC) is used to relate to and assist individuals who have suffered unfavourable outcomes following exposure to traumatic events. (Bessel van der Kolk, 2014)

Social workers recognize the impact of trauma on children's development, behaviour, and general welfare, and therefore utilize trauma-informed approaches to assistance. They provide trauma-informed treatments and supports that prioritize collaboration, safety, empowerment, and trust. This helps children who have previously experienced abuse, neglect, or exploitation to recover.

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIP:

To guarantee a coordinated and comprehensive response to the needs of children in need of care and protection, social workers work in conjunction with a variety of stakeholders, such as child protection agencies, law enforcement, schools, healthcare providers, and community organizations (jolly john, 2023) They make use of partnerships and community resources to improve support networks and encourage favourable outcomes for kids and families.

6. CONCLUSION

Social workers are dedicated to their goal of fostering the resilience, safety, and well-being of children who require care and protection in spite of these obstacles. They keep pushing for investments in child welfare services, policy improvements, and institutional reforms so that every kid has the chance to grow up in a supportive, safe, and nurturing environment.

Social workers are essential in meeting the needs of children who require care and protection, standing up for their rights, and making it easier for them to get interventions and supportive services. Social workers contribute to creating a world that is safer, more welcoming, and more equal for families and children who are at risk through their commitment, empathy, and knowledge. Social workers play a vital role in safeguarding and empowering children as we fight to build a society in which every kid can flourish and realize their full potential.

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