

Research Article

Social Work Intervention for Promoting Human Rights Culture

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ABSTRACT

Creating human rights culture is crucial for sustainability and well-being of human kind. The effective implementation of social work principle and values for human rights practices can cultivate human rights culture. Rights relating to human needs, freedom and duties have to be upheld and nurtured. The magnitude of violations of human rights are perpetrated every day threatening the peace and harmony of the people. Sexual harassment, dowry deaths, physical and mental abuses, police torture and detention without trial, displacement of people due to natural disaster and conflicts are endangered even the survival of human being. The victims of human rights violations are bounded throughout their life without getting legal and public support. In this situation, the relevance of social work intervention is becoming very crucial. It ensures the people resist violations of human rights which threaten or diminish quality of life and promote life-enhancing care, protection and welfare. Advocacy is a major social work intervention to appraise and restore human rights. It is a process by an individual or group which normally aims to influence public-policy and resource allocation decisions within political, economic, and social systems and institutions- that directly affect the people's lives. Human rights advocacy includes many activities that a person or organization undertakes through media, campaigns, sensitizing the mass, commissioning, publishing and dissemination of knowledge. It leads to making a violation-free society with respecting the worth and dignity of the individual and group. Though the social work intervention on human rights practices is to improve the quality of life.

Key words : Social justice, Dignity, Violations, Advocacy

Introduction

“All citizens of a society should enjoy the full benefits that society offers. A society, in turn, flourishes when its citizens contribute their fullest potential. The interruption of normal developmental processes by personal crises, poverty, unemployment, poor health, and inadequate education jeopardizes the well-being of citizens. The prevalence of inequity, discrimination, violations of human rights, and other forms of social injustice compromise the wellbeing of society” [1].

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The doctrine of human rights aims to identify the necessary positive and negative prerequisites for a universal minimal standard of justice, tolerance, equality and human dignity that can be considered the public moral norms owed by and to individuals by the mere virtue of their humanity [2]. Human rights culture is a lived awareness of these human rights principles in one's mind and heart, dragged into one's everyday life. Principles and values of Human Rights

must be known not only cognitively, but also on the feeling level, the lived level of the heart. It is not good enough for society to only know, for example, that health care, shelter, and security are human rights, as enunciated in the Universal Declaration [4], it is important for a society to act upon this knowledge in ways that can implement these rights for every person, everywhere. But the journey from the mind to the heart is a long one, longer still to drag this lived knowledge, which is power, into our everyday lives [3]. In order to cultivate these lived awareness on human rights values to be common social work intervention is vital because human rights are inseparable from social work theories, values, ethics and practice Rights corresponding to human needs have to be upheld and fostered, and they embody the justification and motivation for social work action and concerned with the protection of individual and groups needs. It is often forced to mediate between the people, the state and other authorities, to champion particular causes and to provide support when state actions threaten or neglect the rights and freedoms to individuals and /or groups [5].

Human Rights Conceptual Analysis

Human rights are fundamental to the stability and development of countries all around the world. Great emphasis has been placed on international conventions and their implementation in order to ensure adherence to a universal standard of acceptability [8]. With the advent of globalization and the introduction of new technology, these principles gain importance not only in protecting human beings from the ill-effects of change but also in ensuring that all are allowed a share of the benefits[7]. However the efficacy of the mechanisms in place today has been questioned in the light of blatant human rights violations and disregard for basic human dignity in nearly all countries in one or more forms[10]. In many cases, those who are to blame cannot be brought to book because of political considerations, power equations etc. When such violations are allowed to go unchecked, they often increase in frequency and intensity usually because perpetrators feel that they enjoy immunity from punishment.

The concept of human rights can be found as far back in time as the age of the Greek philosophers Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. Their writings on the idea of natural law contain many of the same principles that are associated with human rights[6]. The Magna Carta (1215) is considered a milestone in the history of human rights and several great thinkers such as Grotius, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau and Kant talk about the concept. Some religious texts also are said to reflect the principles of human rights [9]. The Rig Veda promotes conduct that is based on equality. Even certain Bible passages have similar content. For instance, in the Old Testament, when the midwives of Pharaoh disobey his order to kill all male babies, they do so on the basis of higher and more fundamental laws that they felt bound to follow[13]. The American and French declarations of independence in the 18th century were important in promoting human rights that were universal, individual and rational. In the 19th century, the abolition of slavery and increased debate over freedom from government intervention also furthered these principles. With the dwindling of colonialism development in the third world received more focus and adult suffrage, liberty, equality and justice came to be emphasized [12].

“Human rights are inherent in our nature and without which we cannot live as human beings. The universal declaration of human rights(UDHR) 1948 and the covenant that followed have not specifically defined the expression. The human rights are the lawful claims of human souls for such conditions that are essential for the human beings to live with dignity and with social security [11]. It is a cry for freedom and a demand for conditions which would ensure development coupled with protection. Human rights have been the subject of much jurisprudential discussion, which revolves around the idea of the entitlement of human beings to

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a range of legal rights, which are fundamental and inviolable in nature. ‘Human rights’ as “those minimal rights, which every individual must have against the State or other public authority by virtue of his being a member of the human family, irrespective of any other consideration.” Gewirth described human rights as “rights which all persons equally have simply insofar as they are human” [13]. The way in which the expression ‘Human Rights’ is defined in the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993, is complex. Human rights means “the rights relating to life, liberty, equality and dignity of the individual guaranteed by the Constitution or embodied in the International Covenants (ICCPR & ICESCR) and enforceable by courts in India” [14]. Human Rights will mean those interests of human beings, which are recognized and protected by the State. There are civil, political, legal and moral rights to a person. There is right to life, liberty, freedom of thought and expression and equality before law. The Figure 1 depict the conceptual frame on human rights .

Social work

Social work aims to maximize the development of human potential and the fulfillment of human needs. The social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human

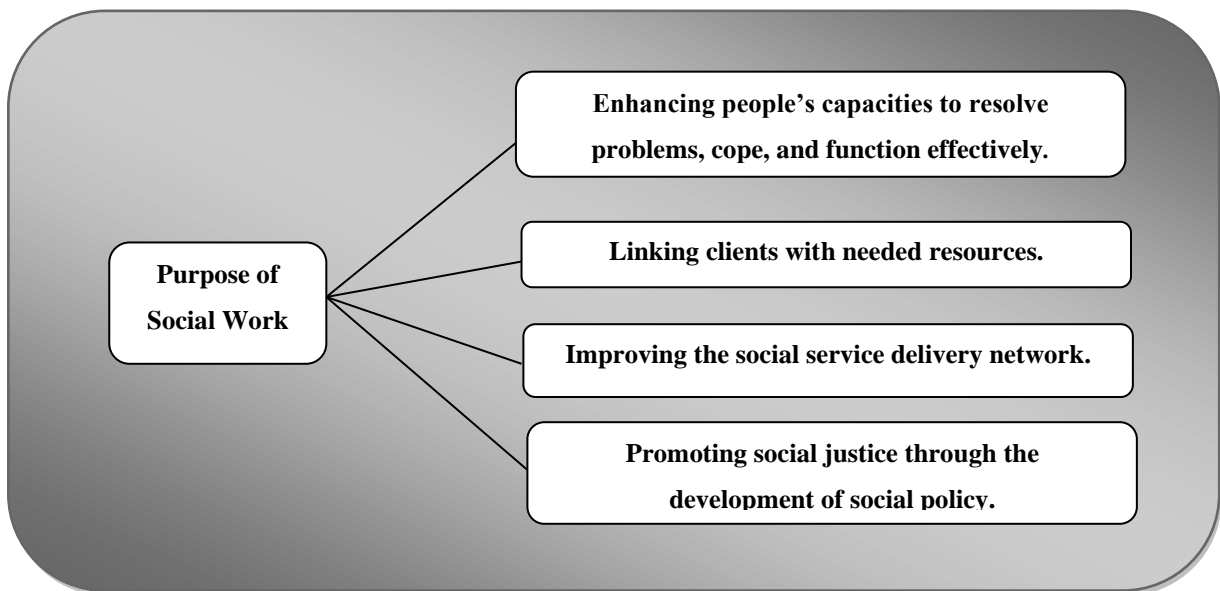
Figure 1: CONCEPTUAL FRAME ON HUMAN RIGHTS				
<u>PRINCIPLES</u>	Inalienable Inherent Inter dependence Irrevocable		Inter relatedness Accountable Indivisible Universal	
<u>VALUES</u>	Dignity Justice Respect Equality			
<u>CLASSIFICATION</u>	Rights		UDHR Article	Example
	First Generation	Civil and Political Rights	Articles 2-21	Right to life, Political Participation
	Second Generation	Socio – economic and Cultural Rights	Articles 22-27	Right to Health Right to education Right to Work
	Third Generation	Solidarity rights	Article 28-30	Right to development Right to peace Right to clean environment
<u>APPROCHES</u>	Natural Law Historical Positivist Marxist Social Science			

relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work [15]. Hence the law full claim is crucial for social work practices. Social work in its various forms addresses the multiple, complex transactions between people and their environments. Its mission is to enable all people to develop their full potential, enrich their lives, and prevent dysfunction. Professional social work is focused on problem solving and change [18]. As such, social workers are change agents in society and in the lives of the individuals, families and communities they serve. Social work is an interrelated system of values, theory and practice .

Social work originates variously from humanitarian and democratic ideals and its values are based on respect for the equality, worth dignity of all people . Social work practice has since its beginning been focused on meeting human need and on developing human potential and resources [20]. Social worker are involved in palnnign estimating , applying and modifying preventive social policies and services to groups ans communities[16] . They intervene in numerous functional sectores, using various methodological approached, working within a brad organizational framework and providing social service to various sectors .

Social work is known for its integrated view, which focuses on persons in the context of their physical and social environments. In response to the mission of the profession, social workers strengthen human functioning and enhance the effectiveness of the structures in society that provide resources and opportunities for citizens[19]. The goals of the social work profession translate its general purpose into more specific directions for action (Figure 2). These goals and objectives lead social workers to enhance clients’ sense of competence, link them with resources, and foster changes that make organizations and social institutions more responsive to citizens’ needs [17]

Figure 2



Relationship between social work and human rights

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“The idea of human rights is implicit in the social work profession’s value base through phrases such as ‘the right to self determination and the inherent worth of the individual as well as its codes of ethics. The policy developed on the foundation of the UDHR and international covenants , advocates the attaining of human rights through positive action by individuals , communities nations and international groups as well as a clear duty not to inhibit those rights” [21].

The social work profession accepts its share of responsibility for working to oppose and eliminate all violations of human rights. Social workers must exercise this responsibility in their practice with individuals, groups and communities, in their roles as agency or organizational representatives and as citizens of a nation and the world. [22]. The following human rights are a common standard and guide for the work of all professional social workers :

1. **Right to Life:** The value of life is central to human rights work. Social workers have not only to resist violations of human rights which threaten or diminish the quality of life, but also actively to promote life enhancing and nurturing activities. Social workers assert the right of individuals and communities to have protection from preventable disease and disability .
2. **Right to Freedom and Liberty** are fundamental freedoms include the right to liberty, to freedom from slavery, to freedom from arbitrary arrest, torture, cruel inhuman or degrading treatment, and freedom of thought and speech .
3. **Equality and Non-Discrimination** are closely linked to principles of justice. Every person regardless of birth, gender, age, disability, race, colour, language, religious or political beliefs, property, sexual orientation, status or social class has a right to equal treatment and protection under the law. Social workers have to ensure equal asses to public services and social welfare provisions .
4. **Ensuring Justice to all** means satisfying human needs, equitable distribution of resources, universal access to health care and education, social development and the a right to protection against arbitrary arrest or interference with privacy, and to equal protection under the law .
5. **Expressing Solidarity with the poor and oppressed** , campaigning for social justice for the poor and disadvantaged encompasses the rights to support from fellow citizens when fundamental freedoms are infringed .
6. **Enhancing Social Responsibility** which is the recognition that each of us has a responsibility to family, to community, to nation and to the world community to contribute personal talents, energy and commitment to the advancement of human rights .
7. **Ensuring Peace and Harmony with Self and others** : Social workers will resist and exercise non-violent pressure for change, but will not engage in acts of violence in the course of their professional activity .
8. **Working for protecting The Environment:** Social workers need to work with community groups in tackling the consequences of environmental decline and destruction .

More than many professionals social workers are conscious that their concerns are are closely linked to respect for human rights they accepted the premise that human rights and fundamental freedoms are indivisible , and hat the full realization of civil economic and cultural rights, they believe that achievement of lasting progress in the implementation of human rights

depends on effective national and international policies of economic and social development. Though the human rights have extralegal dimensions and grass roots grounding is necessary if human rights are to be achieved in practice .

Social work intervention for human rights practice

Social work is a profession that is built on the pursuit and maintenance of human well-being and which goes on to state that two of the key values and principles are: human dignity and worth; and social justice. Human dignity and worth means that social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of every person and respect the human rights expressed in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Social justice encompasses the satisfaction of basic needs; fair access to services and benefits to achieve human potential; and recognition of individual and community rights .

These values and principles in the Code of Ethics already establish the foundations for human rights based social work practice. Human rights are often categorised as first, second and third generations. First generation rights are civil and political rights, like the right to vote, freedom of speech, freedom from discrimination, fair trial etc. Second generation rights are economic, social and cultural rights, like the right to health, housing, social security and education. Third generation rights are collective rights, such as the right to development and self determination .

In terms of social work practice, realising first generation rights means advocacy either on behalf of individuals or disadvantaged groups. Social workers working in advocacy might be involved in the protection of civil and political rights through advocacy groups, refugee action groups or prisoner reform. Working to realise second generation rights is the bread and butter work of most social workers. It involves putting services in place to meet rights like the right to education, health care, housing, income and so on. Third generation rights are collective rights which intersect perfectly with the social work practice of community development. Social workers are facilitators for this process of change that occurs from the grass roots in a bottom-up way. Community development needs a human rights based framework if it is to be successful, and human rights needs a community development framework if they are to be realized .

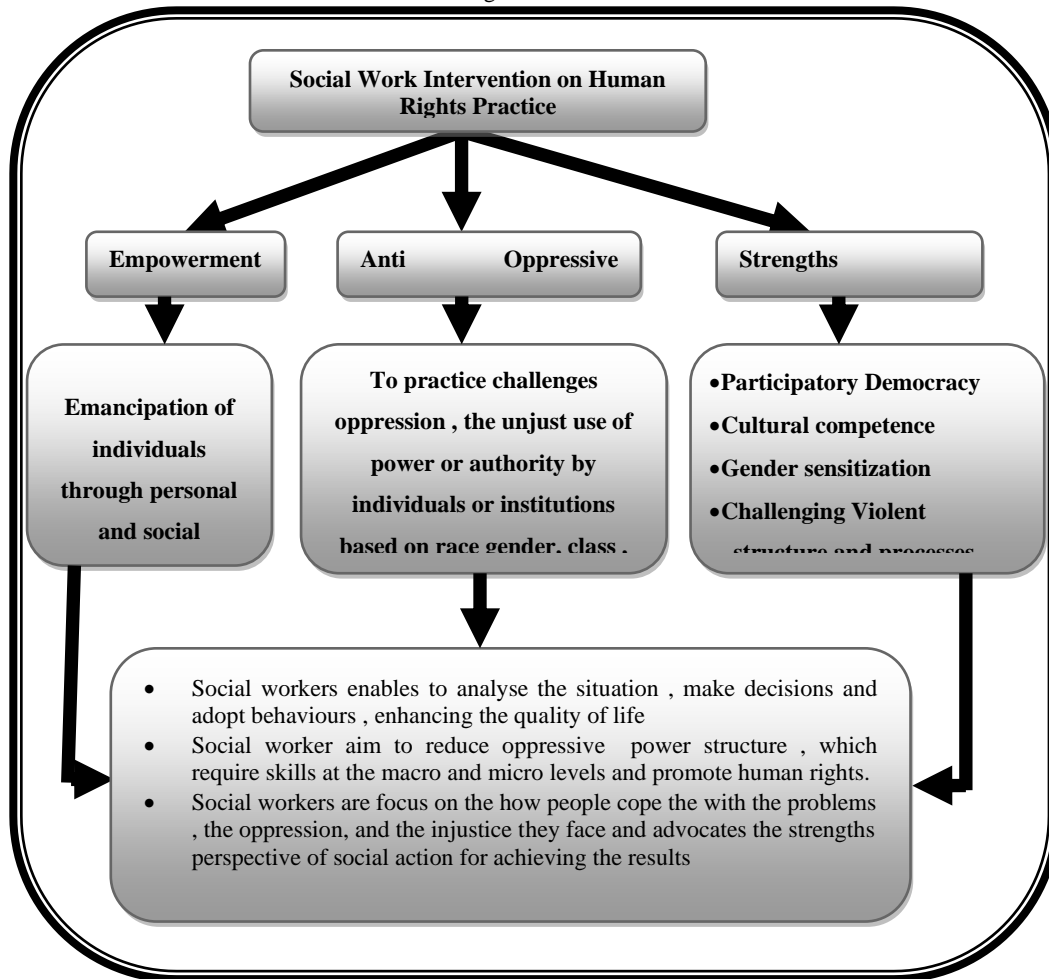
By adopting rights- based approach the social work profession has to confront issues such as what it means in practices, what lessons it draws from rights and participatory approaches and how it relates to questions of power, empowerment and good governance [23]. The linkage between social work and human rights practice in the way we analyse the problem and identify the human rights that are not available and the interventions to ensure that people can attain human rights[24]. Social workers have method and tools which are effective for promoting and ensuring human rights for the disadvantaged and marginalized people . There are three major approaches for human rights practices which are depicted in the figure 3.

Conclusion

Creating a human rights culture is a kind of paradox. Because principles of such documents, like Universal Declaration of Human and covenants must be known not only cognitively, but also on the feeling level. We must recognize the value of these documents and perhaps it is acknowledging our responsibilities to others and be acquainted with the human rights ours' and others'. So the social work intervention for ensuring human rights culture as the way to tackle this paradox. Interventions strategies are selected on the basis of the issues, needs and strengths of the client and which are intended to aid clients in alleviating problems impeding their well-being. Here advocacy is take as the core intervention strategy to practice

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Figure 3



human rights principles and values in to real. A society with fully internalized with human rights can be feasible through a mutually gratifying process of inculcating these values into the culture of man .

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