1

Introduction to Social Casework: Historical Development

Hema Mehta

Introduction

All human beings are part of society and everyone in the society has different social role and duties. While performing his role and duties, individual faces many problems in one or other form, which hinder his performance as a social being. Casework is the oldest and the most developed method of solving individual's problems and improving his social relations. In this unit we will discuss the concept of casework and its usefulness in solving these problems. We will also study the evolution and historical development of casework in the West and in India.

The Nature of Individual

Every individual is unique and his/her needs are different from others in society. Consequently, the treatment given or approach to one individual cannot be used for the other individual. To understand human behaviour and the individual difference Grace Mathew has given following proposition.

● An individual's behaviour is conditioned by his/her environment and his/her life experiences. Behaviour refers to reacting, feeling, thinking, etc. Attributes of human being are not visible to others.

Hema Mehta, Indore School of Social Work, Indore

The conditions and influences surrounding the persons constitute the environment.

- For human growth and development it is essential that certain basic needs should be met. The basic needs may be – physical and mental. Physical needs refer to needs for food, shelter and clothing. Mental needs can be in the form of emotional security, need of parents, child, and spouse.

- Emotional needs are real and they cannot be met or removed through intellectual reasoning.

- Behaviour is purposeful and is in response to the individual's physical and emotional needs.

- Other people's behaviour can be understood only in terms of ones own emotional and intellectual comprehension.

Each individual and every individual has his/her own importance. As every human beinghas his/her own set of qualities, he/she cannot be neglected.

Herbert Bisno described the following attributes of individual nature:

- Each individual by the very fact of his/her existence is of worth.

- Human suffering is undesirable and should be prevented or at least alleviated, whenever possible.

- All human behaviour is the result of interaction between the biological organism and its environment.

- Man does not naturally act in a rational manner.

- Man is amoral and asocial at birth.

- There are both individual and common human needs.

- There are important differences between individuals and they must be recognized and allowed for.

- Human motivation is complex and frequently obscure.

- Family relationships are of primary importance in the early developments of individual.

- "Experiencing" is essential for learning process.

While these two attributes regarding individuals seem obvious at first glance they are often forgotten. Our tendency to simplify events and our biases often prevents us from realizing the uniqueness of the individuals with whom we are dealing. We often observe how individuals with different natures are treated using the common approach. For example, we hear people say that beggars have no self-respect and are lazy. To avoid this mistake caseworkers have to remind themselves that each client who comes to the agency has his own outlook, feelings and attitudes. Their problems may have some similarities but has important differences. Thus the treatment must be differentiated according to the needs of the individual. The caseworker should attempt to understand the client's need and respond to him in an individualized way according to his needs. Similarly the caseworker should recognize the individual as important simply because he is human being. Professional acceptance of clients by putting aside personal bias is an important requirement of the caseworker. The caseworker may have to deal with terrorists, criminals and other deviants who he/she may personally dislike.

According to Maslow's prioritization, needs can be categorized as follows:

- **Physiological needs:** This refers to basic needs of food, shelter, cloth, air, and water.

- **Safety needs:** It is the nature of human being that it like to be on the safer side and avoid physical damage and hazards.

- **Need for belongingness and love:** Every human being loves to be love and to belong a particular group and with the prestige in that group. If a person is deprived from parental love, affection of siblings and peer group, there are chances of development of violent behaviour in him.

- **Esteemed needs:** It is general psychology of human being that it like to be at the top position, to have status in the society and acceptance in his own group.

- **Need for self-growth and identification:** After fulfillment of above needs there is need for opportunities available to a person for self-growth and to prove his capabilities for his remarkable identification in the society.

- **Need for cognitive understanding of self and the world around:** When the person recognize himself and the world around him it is said that all his needs are fulfilled. It is the top most need in the need hierarchy, which governs the person at spirituality and very few persons achieve it.

We can say that each human being has a number of needs requiring satisfaction. If these needs are not fulfilled it may result in frustration followed by crisis situation. The caseworker has to understand the client's

need in order to study, diagnose and to give treatment according to his needs.

Problems Faced By Individual and Families

Problems may be caused due to the non-fulfillment of needs or inability to perform his social roles. The social roles are connected with being a parent, spouse and wage-earning worker etc.

Causes of Human Problems

Problem of social functioning causes distress to the individuals. These individuals are not to be considered as a unit of category but a unique person. Casework method tries to resolve individual problems through scientific approach.

According to Encyclopedia of Social Work Vol.1, the reason for human problems may be divided into five categories:

1) Lack of material resources

2) Misconception about the situation and relationships and lack of appropriate information

3) Illness or health problems related to a disability

4) Emotional distress resulting from stressful situations

5) Personality features or deficiencies

Grace Mathew undertook a survey of 200 casework records, which was based on the reports of casework services rendered for the clients in India. From the sample obtained from Survey of Casework Record; the problems can be categorized as follows:

1) Problems related to illness and disabilities

2) Problems due to lack of material resources

3) School related problems

4) Problems related to institutionalization

5) Behaviour problems

6) Problems of marital discord

7) Problem situations needing a follow-up service

8) Needs related to rehabilitation of people handicapped by disabilities

9) Predicaments and difficulties of client caught up in problems that have been regarded as social problems like gambling, prostitution, alcoholism, drug addiction and unmarried motherhood.

Types of Problem

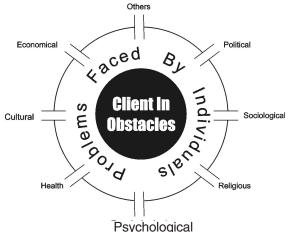In general we can categorize the problems faced by individual as:

Figure: Problems Faced by Individuals

Broadly we can say that in a society many problems are associated with the individual and the prime aim of casework is to resolve individual problems in order to help him/her to be independent and effective in social functioning.

Concept of Social Casework

In the words of Gordon and Hamilton "social casework which is both a tool and area of work consists of processes which develop personality through adjustment consciously affect individual by individual between man and his social environment". Miss Richmond gives this definition of casework**. "**Social casework is art of doing different things for and with different people by cooperating with them to achieve at one and at the same time their own and their society's betterment**."** Thus it is both art and science of resolving individual problems in social area, for individual and society are interdependent and social forces influence behaviour and attitude of an individual.

The focus of each branch is different but the practice of these three branches is not mutually exclusive. Social casework is concerned with individual and his adjustment to life and general social welfare. It does not concentrate on individual to the exclusion of social factors. In other words the basic objective of social casework is to promote social welfare with basic focus on individuals.

Basic Assumptions of Social Casework

The main work of social casework is to enable an individual in solving a problem through self-efforts. The social worker's job is to provide adequate help and guidance. According to **Hamilton** the chief assumptions of social casework are:

- Individual and society are interdependent and complimentary to each other.

- Various factors operative in the society influence human behaviour and attitude.

- Some problems are psychological and some are interpersonal in nature.

- In the process of social casework conscious and controlled relations are established for achieving its aims.

- Social casework enables an individual to solve his/her problems by channelising his/her energy and capacity positively.

- Social casework provides everyone equal right to progress. It also provides help to every needy and disabled person.

Philosophical Assumptions

The ultimate goal of social casework is to establish harmonious relationship between individual and the society to which he belongs. According to Grace Mathew there are certain assumptions, which constitute the fundamental structure of social casework. They are generated out of the collective thinking and traditions in casework.

These philosophical assumptions are:

- Every human being has to be considered as a person with dignity and worth.

- Human beings are interdependent and it governs their interaction in social groups.

- There are common human needs for growth and development of individuals. The existence of

common needs does not negate the uniqueness of individuals. Every individual is like all other human beings in some aspects and like no other individuals in certain aspects.

- Every individual has within him/her, the potential for growth and achievement and he/she has a right to the realization of this potential. From this it follows that people has capacity to change.

- Society has an obligation to help those who do not have the means for the realization of their potentials.

Historical Development of Casework in West and India

Individuals in every society right from ancient times were helped by others to solve their problems. All religions encouraged the helping of the poor and helpless people. Howeverit took professional shape in the late 19th and early 20th century. To date the actual beginning of social casework in west is impossible but some important landmarks in its growth is given below.

Early Beginnings

The Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor (A.I.C.P.) formed in America in 1843 approached the problem of poverty more individually than had been previously it was. The aims of A.I.C.P. were to visit the poor at homes, to give counsel, to assist them practically in obtaining employment, to instill in them self-respect and self-reliance, to inculcate the habits of economy and whenever absolutely necessary to provide such relief as should be suited to their wants.

The first professional School of Social Work was the New York School established in 1898. The establishment

of this institution indicates that social work had sufficiently large body of knowledge and skills by that time. Further the need was felt for better trained professionals as complicated modern problems could not be handled in traditional ways.

1877s

The earliest organised effort in USA was the establishment of American Charity Organisation Society in 1877. One of the aims of the society was to find out the ways and means of helping the poor and needy and thus to organise individualised service. The society used volunteers called "FRIENDLY VISITORS". We will be studying in detail about contribution of Friendly Visitors in coming chapter of the same unit. The main plan of this organisation included the investigation of applicants to assess the need, central registration, recording and relief giving.

1914-1917

The first training programme for the casework started at this time. Casework at this time was based more on medical model. For sometime casework was only confined to sick persons, i.e. a sick person to be treated was the priority.

The term "work with case" was used for the first time in national conference in USA. The first professional training programme especially for the casework was started in the form of summer training. The impact of this training programme resulted in the need for more substantial training and schools of social work attached to the agencies came into existence. When these schools started regular training programme, they were recognized as professionals.

Miss Richmond and Francis McLean, offered specialized service to thousand of clients. Social casework journal of family service association grew out of efforts of this great pioneer movement. The first book in case work "Social Diagnosis" was published in 1917 by Miss Richmond.

Impact of First World War

Prior to First World War, major emphasis was given on the social factor, which influenced individuals who had problems. The causes of these problems were found in the environment and the larger social economical pressure under which people lived. The primary basis of social casework was human behaviour.

The impact of Second World War was that social work became popular and a large number of people who had not been acquainted with it became familiar with it. Medical and psychiatric social workers were especially in demand during the war. Many men and women came to know the meaning of social casework for the first time.

The First World War made a wide impact on social casework. Psychiatry in this period became important. The contribution of Freud and his follower influenced the method employed by the caseworker in dealing with the individuals. Child guidance clinic movement and treatment, prevention of mental problem and delinquency strengthened the psychological orientation of this approach.

1920s

At this time caseworker adopted the new psychoanalytical approach to understand the client and their problems. These caseworkers found the psychoanalytical theory and the concepts in psychology

very useful in casework movement. This psychoanalytical theory was given by Freud and known as Freudian psychology made strong impact on casework. Thus it was the era of psychiatric development of social work. Focus of caseworker was on psychic forces within the individuals. Professionals also began to move into other fields like prisons, school, etc.

In late 1920's it was expected that client and his/her involvement in problem solution was essential for the success of casework. At this time caseworker realized that more responsibilities should be given to individuals to make decisions of their life. In 1930 psychoanalytical contributions became very important and social caseworkers accepted the new method of dealing with clients.

Gradually several schools of thought developed with many points in common and number of differences. These schools were based on the theory of Sigmund Freud and Otto Rank.

1930s

It was the era of sudden changes in life-style that lead to economic depression. Casework had to consider the economic factors, which were causing distress to the clients. It was realized that economic distress could lead to emotional disaster and breakdown. The social and economic need of great differentiation refocused sociological and reality consideration for social work and compiled action on the part of federal government. At this time many work programmes such as federal emergency relief act, the work progress administration, the public work administration and the civilian conservation corporation emerged. Thus major outcome of the depression was establishment of governmental public assistant programme. It relieved the voluntary

agencies from the task of providing economic help. Caseworker was able to devote more time in dealing with clients inter personal problems.

1940s

The 1940s were dominated by the world war. Social work approaches emerged in the previous decade were transformed by the changes in theory and practice.

Impact of Second World War

Social casework was greatly influenced by the events of Second World War. During the war there was increase in personal problems on the part of clients due to financial crises. Emotional problems also increased. To meet these needs and to solve these problems family agencies were started.

1950s

In this era private practice in the social work began. Professional agencies were started growing in the field of case study. Now the caseworker started going to community and the problems of community were taken care indirectly through solving individual problems. It was the period of resettlement, revaluation, and upgradation for social worker.

1960s

Here the most promising development increased stress on importance of research. The past overemphasis on either environment or personality gave away the awareness of interdependence of these two factors. In this era social action was more focused to bring about change in the society. Casework method adopted new techniques and principles.

Current Trends

One of the current trends is shifting of caseworker from older and established agencies to newer and experimental areas of social work. Caseworkers are now more aware of their own contribution to human welfare. As a profession it has now gained more popularity. One of the current trends is increased stress on the importance of research. Also there is growing awareness that personality and environment are interdependent.

Importance of Casework as a Method: Casework in India

Indian culture and religions advocate the need to help the poor and needy. There is also a tradition of knowledgeable individuals providing advice and support to others, for example Krishna gave advice and support to Arjun at the beginning of the Mahabharat war. The Hindu Shastras also emphasized on giving which may be in the form of wealth, knowledge and wisdom. In Buddhism help should be given to relatives and friends. In Islam alms was given by the fortunate to the State and used for welfare of needy. Christian missionaries in India also started activities which aimed at helping the poor. But these efforts were paternalistic in nature and did not aim at making the individual independent. Further, the relationship in these instances was not professional. Thus there exists an important difference between modern professional casework and traditional helping of needy individuals.

Education of social workers in India started with the training of volunteers engaged in charity and relief activities. In 1911 N.M. Joshi had established Social Service League in Mumbai. This league conducted training programme for volunteers who are at the service of people suffering from famines, epidemics,

floods and such other disasters and also who conducted welfare programmes among the poor and the destitute. The first professional social workers who did casework in the Indian settings were trained in the American School of Social Work. In 1936 Sir Dorabji Tata Graduate School of Social Work, now known as Tata Institute of Social Science (TISS), was started to impart training to those who had a University degree in the field of social service. Thus, the training for the social work was changed into a full time career oriented educational programme. Casework as a theoretical course and as a method of practice in the academic programme started from the year 1946. Initially social casework was practiced in relatively few agencies and institutions but nowadays social casework is practiced in many agencies, institutions and organisation such as hospitals, clinics, courts, industry, military organisation, family welfare agency, child welfare agency, institution for the aged, destitute, orphans etc.

Major Landmarks in the History of Casework Development

Contribution of Friendly Visitor

As we discussed earlier the term Friendly Visitors was first used in 1877 by American Charity Organisation Society for its volunteers. Citizens of England with the object of helping poor people founded this society. These people had funds to help poor and needy. They were kindhearted volunteers who visited poor families to assess their needs and to provide help, guidance and advice. They made their visits in act of charity and not expecting any monetary rewards. They collected data about the needy individuals and families and helped them after assessing their needs.

There were hundreds and hundreds of volunteers who made their visits to the home of poor and brought whatever they could in the way of understanding, sympathy, encouragement and general goodwill. The role of Friendly Visitor was educational one and goal was to improve the character through personal influence. Living advice and being model were two methods by which the visitor influenced the client and there can be no doubt that some of them did exert a wholesome personality influence in difficult personal and family situation. However, there was comparatively little consciousness or the analysis of factors at work in the relationship. At the same time it was probably through the efforts of Friendly Visitors that the concept of scientific charity evolved and seeds of social casework were sown. The visitor found that the problem of all poor people is not alike and they should not be treated in the same manner.

The term Friendly Visitors was subsequently supplemented by the term "Paid Agents". These Paid Agents developed systematic procedures in performing their task. They collected data about the needy individuals and families and helped them after assessing their needs. Paid Agents also maintained records including personal data and the type of help given to clients. The collective experience of Friendly Visitors and Paid Agents facilitated the understanding of human behaviour.

With the development of Schools of Social Work, Friendly Visitors received training and instructions about the method of investigation, diagnosis and treatment from experienced social worker.

Contributions of Mary Richmond

In the previous chapter we discussed that the beginning of professional casework is associated with publication of Mary Richmond's book "Social Diagnosis".

In the words of Richmond "Social diagnosis is the attempt to arrive at as exact a definition as possible of social situation and personality of the given client". She was interested in the formation of methodology of helping clients. She visualized a diagnostic summary with following three headings:

- Difficulties defined

- Factors Causal

- Assets and liabilities

Richmond knew that the facts, which were observed and inferred, are not always scientifically reliable. Richmond tried to answer the following questions."Who arrives at diagnosis? what are the basis of influence? how reliable is the worker's judgment and the facts on which they are based?"

Richmond found that diagnosis is a process consisting sequence of steps in order to facilitate the worker to arrive finally at his/her definition of social situation and personality of client. The sequence of steps was as under:

- Interview with client

- Contact with his family and near ones

- Search of inside and outside sources for cooperation

- The interpretation of information collected

Interview with Client

According to Richmond the primary step is to know the personality of the individual and to study his/her life closely, which can be done by interviewing him/her about his/her family background, family doctor, health

agencies, schools, past and present employers, residence and neighbourhood. Interviewer's aim is to collect information regarding the sources for further information. Richmond also described the objectives of the worker for the interview, which are to:

- give the client fair and patient hearing.

- establish mutual understanding on good basis.

- secure clues about other source of information.

- begin the slow process of developing self-help and self-reliance.

Contact with his Family and Near Ones

In the critical contact with the family, Richmond saw the need of an individual not only for assessing the personality, diagnosis of problem but also to develop a relationship with other members of the family. Richmond felt that attention should be given to family cohesion, unity of family and the capacity of family members toward affection, enjoyment and social development, children's ambitions and aptitude, interference of relatives and difference in role were to be noted.

Search of Inside and Outside Sources for Collaboration

Outside source of information to make diagnosis included social agencies, churches, doctors and health agencies, present and former neighbours, relatives, friends, present and past employers, school and public record, etc. and inside sources like his/her willpower, confidence, self-reliance, attitude etc.

Miss Richmond recommended that the worker gain information from this outside source and he/she goes first to those sources which were likely to influence

his/her personality and the most prominent factors in client's history.

The Interpretation of Information Collected

The collected data from the above sources was considered as raw material for diagnosis. Such interpretation is arrived through the careful weighing of evidence and critical comparison. Social evidence was defined Richmond as "all facts as to personal or family history are taken together indicates the nature of a given clients in social difficulties and means to their solutions". She also recognized that the client's own hopes, plans and attitude towards life are more important than any other information.

Richmond made the first exclusive effort to analyse casework process. This was the first truly professional approach in casework. The contribution of Richmond has always been held in respect by modern caseworker because of many reasons. It contains the concept of self-determination which has become very important in modern casework philosophy.

Richmond's interest was dual. On the one hand it was a social and on the other hand it was psychological. It was concluded that forces within the individuals and outside him/her influence his/her behaviour and his/her nature in the society. Richmond attempted to combine this dual interest and she suggested that there ought to be a profession called "Sociatry".

Contribution of Freudian Theory

As mentioned earlier during the First World War much the influence of psychiatry became strong. Before the advent of psychiatry Social Casework was practiced as an active art. The caseworker investigated, diagnosed and administered the social services. After being

influenced by Freudian theory, social caseworker also provided individual therapy. Feelings, emotions, attitudes, repressed conflicts and the dealing with the unconscious became an integral part of Social Casework understanding and method. Gradually, social work curriculums in the West include psychiatry.

Freudian Theory

Today, as in the past, many social workers---not only those who specialize in psychoanalysis---draw on Freudian theory in their efforts to understand human behaviour. In 1918, the first psychoanalytically oriented school of social work, Smith College School for Social Work, was founded to teach students about Sigmund Freud's ideas and their application to practice, particularly in the treatment of WWI veterans' suffering from trauma due to their war experience. Freud's influence is found in many areas of casework. His greatest influence was however on caseworker- client relationship. Previously clients were persuaded, convinced or even coerced into accepting the caseworker suggestions and ideas. But now the caseworker worker with client by listening and honoring the client's self-expression.

Informally, a few psychoanalysts did provide training and supervision to social workers and in 1948 social workers were first accepted at the psychoanalytic institutes of the National Psychological Association for Psychoanalysis, and the Postgraduate Centre for Mental Health, both in New York. Organisations such as the American Psychoanalytic Association, which earlier had prevented social workers, dropped their prohibitions against admitting social workers.

The basic concepts of Freudian theory is as mentioned below:

Unconscious Mind

Through his experience with hypnosis and study of dreams, Freud found a word of hidden mentality, which he called the "Unconscious". Many of the social workers that came into contact with Freud's concept of unconsciousness, and psychiatry began to introduce these concepts into social work.

Ambivalence

Thinking of men is divided into two parts and Freud noted that these two parts were often in conflict with each other. To understand the ambivalence he explained that, onecould love and hate simultaneously, one could have fear and courage at the same time etc.

The Past

Freud observed that there were many conflicts between past experience and present attitude of a person. That is why to treat the conflict one should know the history of conflict.

Transference

Transference refers to any distortion of a present relationship because of unresolved (and mostly unconscious) issues left over from early relationship.

Resistance

Resistance refers to the resistance to interpretation of transference.

The Chief Conception of Freud are:

1) Unconscious mind is the determinant behaviour.

2) Ambivalence in feeling and attitude.

3) Past experience determines the present behaviour of the person.

4) The recognitions of the phenomenon of transference in psycho-therapy

5) Resistance to interpretation of transference to be dealt in all helping process.

Freud's three disciples Alfred Adler, Carl Jung and Otto Rank have developed schools of their own. Adler was instrumental in establishing the first child guidance clinic in Vienna. Adler introduced the system of "individual psychology". Jung has given analytical psychology and emphasized a relationship with the therapist and therapeutic factor. Otto Rank practiced as a therapist and wrote extensively on technical as well as on cultural aspects of psychoanalysis and gives emphasis on psychotherapeutic philosophy.

Value of Social Casework within the Sphere of Social Work

We know that Social Casework as method of social work aims at helping individual to solve his/her problem in the society to perform in better way and to enhance his/her own capabilities. The basic unit of society is individual. If individuals are satisfied in their life and efforts are made to minimize maladjustment then it leads to formation of peaceful society. Society is consisting of individual.

Every profession has a tested body of knowledge for it's own growth and development. This body of knowledge should be easily understandable and communicable and should include principles, techniques, method, procedure, tools and terminology of its own. The social work as profession has developed a body of knowledge,

which include method and tools, and terminology of its own. In the sphere of social work, casework as a method demands a dual orientation. Firstly orientation in human psychology, secondly orientation in knowing cultural force of the society in which it works.

Initially Social Casework was practiced in a few agencies and institutions but it has been increasingly utilized in newer settings. Today there are many agencies, institutions and organisations, which frequently use social casework. It is practiced in hospitals, clinics, courts, industries, military organisations, family welfare agencies both government and voluntary, immigrant agencies, day nurseries and schools, adoption agencies, child guidance clinics, hygiene organisation, health organisation and others.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have studied the concept of casework i.e. casework for individual and general welfare, basic and philosophical assumptions of casework, its functioning in the society etc. We further studied the historical development of casework in West, its roots in the form of concept of charity, then its journey from friendly visitors to modern professional caseworkers. Then we studied the development of casework in India. Contribution of "Buddhism", "Maurya", "Islam", British period in historical development of casework and starting of professional social work with establishment of schools of social work in India. We also studied the impact of World Wars, Friendly visitors, contributions of Mary Richmond and Freud in the history of casework development.

Apart from the above topics we also studied about the individual needs i.e. his/her basic needs, physical

needs, psychological needs etc. and about the distress caused by non-fulfillment of needs. Then we discussed about the problems faced by individuals and families in their day-to-day life and the role of caseworker in resolving the problem, then the scope of casework in social work. Casework as a tool of dealing with individual has become an important method of social work.

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