

6

Social Welfare Administration: Concept, Nature and Scope

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Introduction

In early times, social welfare functions were performed by a few individuals or groups of individuals motivated by compassion and concern for the poor, the needy and the destitute. These people were laymen, embodied with the qualities of humanism and selfless service to the community. But in modern times, most of the countries have adopted the concept of a welfare state instead of a police state. The Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences describes a welfare state as a state which takes up the responsibility to provide a minimum standard of subsistence to its citizens. Prof. Kent remarked that by a welfare state we mean a state which provides extensive services to the people. Thus, in a welfare state, the administration enters into economic, political, social and educational life of individuals. And it provides services to individuals, right from an individual's birth to death. The state is to serve the old, sick, orphans, widows, helpless, oppressed and the disabled people whenever they are in need of services.

In the context of the present day social problems, the size of welfare services provided by an increasingly large number of organisations make administration very important. Social welfare services, schemes, projects and programmes, are becoming increasingly complex. Since it is no longer accepted that any normally intelligent person with good intentions can

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administer the welfare work, a sound administration is vital. It is increasingly realised that social welfare programmes require qualified and trained social welfare personnel to perform social welfare functions efficiently. So it is argued that for serving the people effectively it is necessary to professionalise, as professionalisation can increase the ability of social welfare personnel to solve the pressing social problems confronting our society.

Administration

Before discussing the meaning of social welfare administration, it is necessary to know the meaning of the term administration. Administration is a co-operative human effort towards achieving some common goals. Thus every group activity involves administration, whether in a family, factory, hospital, university, or a government department. Whenever two or more people cooperate in view of doing a thing that cannot be taken up alone, the concept of administration appear.

The word administration has been derived from the Latin words 'ad' and 'ministrate' which means to serve. In simple language, it means the 'management of affairs' or 'looking after the people'. To administer is to manage, direct and serve.

L.D. White (1948) views that "the art of administration is the direction, coordination and control of many persons to achieve some purpose or objective."

E.A. Nigro (1951) defines "administration as the organisation and use of men and materials to accomplish a purpose."

According to Herbert A. Simon (1960) "In its broadest sense, administration can be defined as the activities of groups co-operative to accomplish common goals."

Pfiffner defines “administration as the organisation and direction of human and material resources to achieve desired ends.”

Thus, it is clear from above definitions that administration is concerned with proper organisation of men and material to achieve desired ends. It consists of doing the work or getting the work done by others.

Social Administration

To achieve the aims and objectives of social welfare, the government formulates social policies and programmes and in pursuance thereof enacts social legislation, allocates financial assistance and provides organisational and administrative linkages in the form of ministries and departments. It also seeks the partnership of non-governmental organisations for the effective implementation of various social welfare programmes. Administration of all these activities being undertaken in the sphere of social services and social welfare is considered as falling in the realm of social welfare administration.

According to Richard M. Titmus, 1948, “Social administration may broadly be defined as the study of social services whose object is the improvement of conditions of life of the individual in the setting of family and group relations.”

D.V. Donnison, 1961 defines social administration “as the study of development, structure and practices of social services.”

According to Forder (1974) “Social administration is concerned with study of the welfare system, and particularly the government sponsored social services”.

Thus, social administration is concerned with the study of welfare system of government’s sponsored social services.

Definitional Issues: Social Welfare and Its Related Concepts

A number of terms are used in social welfare with subtle differences in their meanings. Some of the important terms are explained as follows.

Social Service: 'Helping the helpless' is social service. It is service rendered to any person on the basis of desire to serve which is inspired by the feeling of helping others. Thus the term 'social service' is used to denote help given by a volunteer to an individual or group at the time of need or to enhance the welfare of individual or the community through personal efforts or by collective action. Social service does not require training in social work or skill in professional techniques.

In the Indian context social services are those services, which are provided on an extensive scale to the needy population; they serve to meet the basic needs of the people and include such services as health, education, housing etc. Providing drinking water during summer, helping the blind to cross a road, rescuing people from a house under fire, donate blood etc. are some of the examples of social service.

Social Welfare Services: Thus social services are the services, meant for the normal population. Whereas, social welfare services are designed for the weaker sections of society or services for particular groups of people. The aim of social services on the other hand is to enhance human quality of resources in general. Social welfare services are also enabling services provided to the weaker sections of the community so as to help them to reach the main stream of society. Thus both these services are supplementary and complementary to each other.

Social Security: Social security is the security that society furnishes through provision of appropriate

services against violation of certain rights to which its members are exposed. These risks are essentially contingencies of life which the individuals of small means cannot effectively provide for by their own ability or foresight alone or even with the helps of their fellow human beings.

Thus, social security is an effort on the part of the state or the employer or any other related agency, to provide an individual all possible help during periods of physical distress or illness or injury and also at the time of economic distress caused due to reduction or loss of earning on account of sickness, disablement, maternity, unemployment, old age or death of the employee.

The work of social security is done through social assistance, social insurance, health and social welfare services etc. Thus social security is a wider concept of social welfare.

Social Work: 'Help the helpless to help themselves'. Social work is a method or process based on scientific knowledge and skill to assist the individuals, group and communities, with the view to enhance their social functioning to grow in accordance with their knowledge, capacities and capabilities. Therefore, social welfare has been used as an end and social work, as a means for the provision of social welfare.

Social Welfare: Social welfare is an organised system of social services and institutions, designed to aid individuals and groups, to attain satisfying standards of life and health. Social welfare therefore, aims at providing services to weaker sections of the population who because of various handicaps such as physical, mental, economic and social, are unable to make use of social services provided by society or have been traditionally deprived of these services.

According to Wayne Vasey (1958) social welfare included two main characteristics:

- The utilisation of welfare measures to support or strengthen the family as a basic social institution through which needs are met; and
- The intent to strengthen the individuals' capacity to cope with their life situation.

The provision of social welfare includes services for children, youth, women, aged, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, other backward classes, minorities, disabled, drug addicts, and economically under-privileged such as destitute and unemployed. Social welfare programmes are, therefore, directed to ameliorate their conditions. Therefore, it requires proper administration.

Social Welfare Administration

Social welfare administration is a process through which social policy is transformed into social services. It involves the administration of public and private agencies. The following definitions are given to elaborate the meaning of social welfare administration.

John C. Kidneigh (1950) defines social welfare administration as the "process of transforming social policy into social services... a two way process: (i)... transforming policy into concrete social services and (ii) the use of experience in recommending modification of policy. This definition, of course, encompasses the idea that administration is the process of transforming policies into action programmes.

According to Walter A. Friedlander (1958) 'administration of social agencies translates the provisions of social legislation of social agencies and the aims of private philanthropy and religious charities into the dynamics of services and benefits for humanity.

According to Arthur Dunham (1962), “administration is the process of supporting or facilitating activities which are necessary and incidental to services by a social agency. Administrative activities range from the determination of function and policies, and executive leadership to routine operations such as keeping records and accounts and carrying on maintenance of services.

Harleigh Tracker (1971) interprets social welfare administration as a “process of working with people in ways that release and relate their energies so that they use all available resources to accomplish the purpose of providing needed community services and programmes.”

The American Council of Social Work Education in its curriculum study, has given a comprehensive definition of social welfare administration. It contains, “Administration is the process of transforming community resources into a programme of community service, in accordance with goals, policies and standards which has been agreed by those involved in the enterprise. It is creative in that it structures roles and relationships in such a way as to alter and enhance the total product. It involves the problem solving process of study, diagnosis and treatment”.

Therefore, on the basis of above definitions, we find that it is a process which includes definite knowledge, understanding, principles and ways of interaction. Its main focus is on the suitability and accessibility of social services to the needy. Social work enables the process of administration through guidance, planning, stimulation, organisation, creating structure, coordinating and research. To fulfil the well defined main objectives of administration, policies are suitably amended; programmes are formulated and budget, finance, personnel and selection procedures are made:

Rosemary Sarri (1971) has outlined the activities of social welfare administration as follows:

- i) Translation of social mandates into operational policies and goals to guide organisational behaviour;
- ii) Design of organisational structures and processes through which the goals can be achieved;
- iii) Securing of resources in the form of materials, staff, clients and societal legitimation necessary for goal attainment and organisational survival;
- iv) Selection and engineering of the necessary technology;
- v) Optimizing organisational behaviour directed towards increased effectiveness and efficiency; and
- vi) Evaluation of organisational performance to facilitate systematic and continuous solution of problems.

Features of Social Welfare Administration

Although the concept of administration is applicable in a broader sense to areas including social welfare, business and government, there are certain distinctive features of social welfare administration. A summary of features highlighting distinctiveness of social welfare administration is given below:

- It is concerned with social agencies and helps them to achieve their objectives within target community. It is specifically concerned with identification of social objectives and formulation/ implementation of programmes.
- From functional point of view, it encompasses three facets of social problems: (i) Restoration

of impaired social functioning; (ii) Provision of resources, social and individual, for more effective social functioning; (iii) Prevention of social dysfunction.

- Despite variations in size, scope, structure and type of programmes, every agency has a governing board as an apex body for final decision making. The board is generally represented by the community it intends to serve.
- Social welfare administration requires optimum utilization of its available resources together with active community participation, so that the ultimate goal of programmes can be achieved properly.
- Social welfare agencies have to earmark certain portion of their resources for survival. But this should not limit their capacity to achieve in quantitative and qualitative terms.
- Social welfare agencies generally function in a co-operative manner and ensure participation of all the members in administration of their activities.
- There is a growing trend in these agencies to recruit professionally qualified manpower. It has helped in introducing professional approach in their functioning.

History of Social Welfare Administration In India

Mutual aid has been part of every society. The desire to help one's fellowmen has been in existence from time immemorial but the forms and methods of help have been varying from society to society, depending upon the social, economic and political factors.

Indian traditional view of social welfare is based on *daya*, *dana*, *dakshina*, *bhiksha*, *samya-bhava*,

swadharma and *tyaga*, the essence of which are self-discipline, self-sacrifice and consideration for others. Well-being of all depend on these values upheld by people individually and through community action. All the religions enjoined upon their devotees to put aside a portion of their income to be utilised for charitable purposes as that would grant them happiness in this world and salvation in the next world. The rulers of those days extended help to the afflicted part of the population during emergencies like floods, earthquakes, fires, droughts and other natural calamities etc.

From the administrative angle, in India, the reigns of king Ashoka, Harsha, Chandra Gupta Maurya, Akbar, Sher Shah Suri and Feroze Tuglak, are the landmarks of administration who took care of the social needs of the people. The British Government also established an administrative set-up intended mainly for maintaining law and order. Some social reform measures were taken up by banning Sati and permitting widow remarriage by Acts passed in 1829 and 1856 respectively.

After independence, the old administrative pattern was more or less continued with necessary changes to suit the social, political and economic set-up evolved. In the field of social welfare, during the First Five Year Plan, government of India created a unique administrative machinery consisting of an autonomous board named CSWB (Central Social Welfare Board) in August 1953. Similarly, Social Welfare Advisory Boards were established at state level. The main purpose of the Board (CSWB) has been to provide financial and technical assistance to voluntary organisations working in the field of social welfare.

If we look at the history of administrative organisation, we find that before 1964 social welfare programmes were being managed by different ministries such

as education, home, industries, health, labour etc. The Renuka Ray Committee in its report submitted in 1960, recommended the establishment of the Department of Social Security. Under the Prime Ministership of Lal Bahadur Shastri, a Social Security Department was established and located in the Ministry of Law on 14th June 1964. Subjects, namely, social security, social welfare, backward classes and khadi and handicrafts were allocated to the Department of Social Security. In 1966, it was renamed as Social Welfare Department. It was located in the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare created in 1971. Its status was raised to a ministry in the year 1979. Its name was further changed to the Ministry of Social and Women Welfare in 1984. With the creation of a separate Department of Women and Child Development in the Ministry of Human Resource Development, it was reorganised and its nomenclature was changed to the Ministry of Welfare in 1985 and subsequently it was renamed as the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

Thus, the Central government has set up a full-fledged ministry and organisations subordinate to it, like National Commission for Scheduled Castes/Tribes, Minorities Commission, National Institute of Social Defence, National Institute for the Handicapped, Department of Women and Child Development, Central Social Welfare Board, National Institute of Public Co-operation and Child Development etc. under its administrative control.

Besides the execution of social welfare projects, schemes and programmes sponsored and financed wholly or partly by the Central government; the state governments and union territory administrations formulate and implement welfare service programmes on their own in their respective jurisdictions. The state government/union territories administrations carry out their welfare obligations and programmes

mainly through their Department of Social Welfare and voluntary organisations. In most of the states there is now either a full-time Secretary for social welfare or it is one of the main portfolios of a secretary. Thus social welfare schemes are still spread over more than one department/directorate. The pattern of implementation of some of the schemes, like old age pension, widow pension, and supplementary nutrition programmes also varies from state to state. Though most of the states now have district social welfare officers, there is no social welfare functionary at block level.

Nature of Social Welfare Administration

The question whether social welfare administration is science or art, has assumed much importance with passage of time. There are conflicting views and opinions on this issue and each appears to be justified in its own way. Social welfare lends itself to two usages. It stands for the process of administering the social welfare programmes. It is also an area of intellectual enquiry. The first is practice, the second is study. As a practice social welfare administration is decidedly an art.

Social Welfare Administration as an Art

The following arguments have been given to support that social welfare administration is an art.

- i) **It can be acquired:** No doubt art is a natural gift. Music, dance, drama or painting are the examples of this category of art. But natural gifts can find their best expression by proper training, without which even the best artists will die unknown. On the other hand a carpenter making furniture out of wood and a goldsmith shaping gold ornaments are also the examples of art. It is so because they possess the following elements:

- a) personal skills;
- b) practical know-how;
- c) result orientation;
- d) creativity; and
- e) constant practice aimed at perfection.

Similarly, the art of social welfare administration can be acquired. Talented persons become the best administrators under proper training. Thus so far acquisition is concerned social welfare administration is also like other arts.

- ii) **It is subjective in nature:** A painter contributes to art by mixing colours. A sculptor performs his job with the aid chisel and hammer. A social welfare administrator with the application of knowledge and skill can make wonders by combining and bringing together available human and material resources to change the very fate of the nation. Today success of every welfare programme depends on how a social welfare administrator performs the job.
- iii) **Practical application of knowledge:** Art is the practical application of systematic knowledge. It is not merely theory but putting that into practice. Similarly, social welfare administration is not merely theory but it is application also. And the best knowledge can be gained by practice alone.

Social Welfare Administration as a Science

Science is a systematic study of knowledge. Those who believe that social welfare administration is a science point out that there are certain specific and clear principles on which day to day administration of social welfare programmes is being run and managed. They also argue that these

principles are based on sound and rational principles, which are also considered universal.

The following arguments have been put forward to justify that social welfare administration is a science:

- **Application of Scientific Method:** The claim of a discipline to be called a science depends on whether the scientific method of study is applicable to it. Social welfare administration can be called a science, because the scientific method of study equally is applicable to it, as in the case of other social sciences.
- **Critical Examination:** Critical examination and study of evidence is the prime requisite of any scientific study. This is possible in social welfare administration also.
- **Universal Guidelines:** Universal principles of social welfare administration also provide the colouring of science. Even if we can not use all the guidelines in a similar manner, these guidelines certainly helps the administrator in proper implementation of social welfare programmes.

However, the nature of social welfare administration as a science has been criticized on the basis of lack of experimentation, and objectivity. Thus it is not an exact science, but is a science in its own way. It is also an art, because it is connected not only with formulation of general principles of social welfare programmes but also with the actual running of the administration of social welfare programmes.

Scope of Social Welfare Administration

There are broadly two views about the scope of social welfare administration. These are:

- i) The POSDCoRB view
- ii) The Integral view.

The POSDCoRB View of Social Welfare Administration

This is a narrow view of social welfare administration and takes into account mostly the execution of the government's sponsored programmes. In other words this view corresponds with the managerial view. Henri Fayol, L. Urwick, Fercey M. Ovean and Luther Gulick are advocates of this view.

According to Henry Fayol the main categories of administration are: (i) Organisation (ii) Command, (iii) Coordination, and (iv) Control. L. Urwick also agrees with Fayol's views.

P.M. Queen says that the study of administration deals with 'men, material and methods'. L. Gulick has given a magic formula in a word 'POSDCoRB' with each letter describing one technique. Gulick's approach is 'technique-oriented' rather than 'subject-oriented'. These letters stand for:

P	Planning
O	Organising
S	Staffing
D	Directing
Co	Coordinating
R	Reporting
B	Budgeting

Planning: Planning means working out broad outline of the things that need to be done and the method to be adopted to accomplish the purpose set for the enterprise.

Organisation: It is the establishment of the formal structure of authority through which the work is sub-divided, arranged, defined and coordinated for the defined objective.

Staffing: Staffing is the process of filling all positions in the organisation with adequate and qualified personnel. Thus it means whole personnel, bringing in and training the staff and maintenance of favourable condition of work.

Directing: It is the continuous task of making decisions and embodying them in specific and general orders and instructions and thus guiding the enterprise.

Coordinating: It means integration of several parts into an orderly whole to achieve the purpose of the undertaking. In other words, coordinating means the all important duty of inter-relating the work of various divisions, sections and other parts of the undertaking.

Reporting: It is keeping those people informed to whom the executive is responsible about what is going on. In other words reporting means keeping both the supervisors and subordinates informed of what is going on and arranging for collection of such information through inspection, research and records.

Budgeting: It is all that goes with budgeting in the form of fiscal planning, accounting and control.

POSDCoRB activities are common to all large scale organisations. They are the common problems of management found in the different agencies, regardless of the peculiar nature of the work they do. Like public administration, social welfare administration is also an instrument with two blades of a scissor. One blade is knowledge of the subject matter and the other is the techniques that are

applied. Both blades must be good to make it an effective tool. Thus, the proper scope of social welfare administration should include both the views i.e. POSDCoRB and subject matter.

The Integral View of Social Welfare Administration

Another view of the scope of social welfare administration has come into vogue during the last few years. Due to emergence of new social problems, the subject matter of Social Welfare Administration is expanding day by day. The already overburdened administrative machinery of the government itself, not being able to successfully tackle these problems, involves various non-governmental organisations for this purpose. Therefore, this view incorporates not only the subject matter of social welfare administration but the implementation aspect as well, which is primarily the focus of POSDCoRB view.

The scope of social welfare administration is quite diverse in nature. With the emergence of new social problems of entirely different nature, a new strategy needs to be evolved for their solution. It may require optimum utilisation of available resources e.g. human, institutional, financial, technological etc. in a changing context. The social welfare administration incorporates a number of factors that are significant in the entire process of successful solution of social problems.

A brief description of these factors (D.R. Sachdeva 1992) is given below:

Contents of social welfare administration: Social welfare is concerned with –

- * *Social Problems* : Assessment of its causes, prevention and treatment through public participation and effective implementation of social legislation.

- * *Social Services* : Social services are meant for general public through provision of health, education, housing etc. and make them more effective for the upliftment of disadvantaged and vulnerable sections of society.
- * *Social Security* : To make and implement effective social assistance and social insurance provisions. It aims to compensate for the loss of income due to unemployment, disability or death caused by accident and old age through social insurance and social assistance.
- * *Social Policy* : To make effective social policy for the welfare of underprivileged sections of the society, to achieve the goals of welfare state through social action.

Interdisciplinary Nature

Social welfare administration requires the interdisciplinary knowledge and constant interaction with other social sciences to know the human being in totality, such as philosophy, psychology, sociology, political science and economics to solve their problems in appropriate manner.

Administrative Structure

Social welfare administrator needs to understand the organisational and administrative structure of

social welfare programme at each and every level of implementing organisation. Similarly, it is also important to know the role and set up of non-governmental organisations for effectively carrying out their functions.

Financial Administration

Since the scope of social welfare and social security is increasing day by day and more and more people are coming under the coverage of these programmes, the need for additional financial support increases. In order to make out proper and effective budgeting of such programme, the knowledge of financial administration is highly essential. Therefore, professionals engaged in social welfare administration must be trained in the techniques and principles of financial administration.

Human Resource Management

In order to provide effective social welfare services to the needy and suffering, it is essential to have committed, trained and motivated social welfare functionaries at different levels. Therefore social welfare administration requires proper knowledge of human resource management which includes knowledge about recruitment policies, job classification, training and development, staff evaluation, advancement and transfer etc. for effective implementation of social services.

Public Relations and Participation

The social welfare administrators needs to be cognizant of the importance of public relations with regard to both their own agency and its services, and the community as a whole. The welfare administrators must be conversant to utilise mass media, such as TV, radio, newspaper, brochures, books and personal

contacts, to interpret their agencies' programmes to the public and reaching community members. It is also required to get associated with the government and non-governmental agencies working in the field, the people or the beneficiaries, whose co-operation and support will add to the effective planning, formulation and implementation of policies and programmes intended for their welfare.

To Conduct Research and Evaluation Studies

Effective research and evaluation studies provide useful feedback on the impact of on-going projects and about the different dimensions of existing social problems. Research also facilitates effective planning, policy formulation and implementation of programmes.

Social Welfare Administration As A Profession

Before answering the question whether social welfare administration is a profession or not, one must know the essential features of a profession and determine how far these features are found in social welfare administration. In general, people do not raise objection when a doctor is called as medical professional, teaching as a profession or for that matter law as profession. The simple dictionary meaning of profession indicates one who has acquired specialised knowledge which is used for instructing, guiding or advising others. An operational definition of profession may be given as follows:

Profession is an occupation for which specialised knowledge, skills and training are required and the use of these skills is not meant for self-satisfaction but are used for larger interests of the society and the success of these skills is measured not in terms of money alone.

Thus all professions are occupations in the sense that they provide means of livelihood. However, all occupations are not professions because some of them lack certain characteristics of a profession. The various characteristics of a profession can be mentioned as:

- Existence of an organised and systematised body of knowledge;
- Formal method of acquisition of knowledge;
- Existence of an association with professionalisation as its goals;
- Formulation of ethical goals; and
- Service motto.

Let us discuss the extent to which all these characteristics are found in social welfare administration to determine whether it is a profession or not.

Existence of Knowledge

Social welfare administration has developed a distinct body of knowledge, in response to the need for managing the emergence of complex social problems in a better way. In India, almost all courses of social work offer a course on social welfare administration to the students. Thus, it satisfies the requirement of a profession in the form of existence of knowledge. However, the social welfare administration is still evolving and new guidelines are being developed though this does not affect its status as being a profession.

Acquisition of Knowledge

An individual can enter a profession only after acquiring knowledge and require skills through formal training. For example, only the formally trained persons can enter the professions of law, engineering or medicine. Thus social welfare administration may be called a profession because schools of social work and schools of public administration provide training in this discipline.

Professional Association

An occupation which claims to be a profession should have an association. Such a representative body of professionals regulate and develop the profession's activities. The professional associations may also prescribe the standards for individuals who want to enter the profession. But we are still struggling for an apex body which would regulate the terms and conditions for Social Welfare Administration like Bar Council of India etc.

Ethical Code

Every profession have a code of ethics. Codes provide proper guidance when the situation at hand is a choice between a good and a bad decision. Thus code of ethics serves several functions for a profession, including guiding, decision making, assessing competence, regulating behaviour and evaluating the profession. In social welfare administration, the code of ethics provides a guide for professional roles and relationships at various levels of responsibility in relation to clients, colleagues, employers, employing organisations and the society. Therefore, the social welfare administration is a profession and its code of ethics is based on the fundamental values of the social work profession that includes the worth, dignity and uniqueness of all persons as well as their rights and opportunities.

Service Motto

In modern times, all human activities are concerned with money. But in a profession, an effort is made to see that service motto should prevail over monetary considerations. Professionals should keep social interest in their mind while charging fees for their professional services. For example, a doctor helps the patient, not only to charge fee, but also to serve humanity in the process. A lawyer helps the client, not to charge the fee only but to provide justice to the client. Similarly, a social welfare administrator administers the social welfare programmes, not only for money and personal satisfaction but use his/her knowledge and skills to serve the larger interest of the society.

Thus, on the basis of the above discussion, it can be said summarized that social welfare administration is yet to achieve the status of a profession. To become an independent profession, it requires to attain social sanction, professional commitment, governmental approval, a professional association to regulate the profession and involvement of trained personnel in the field of welfare administration, instead of bureaucrats.

Conclusion

This chapter has been designed to provide a basic understanding of social welfare administration: concept, nature and scope. We have presented a number of definitions of administration, social administration, social welfare and its related concepts for basic understanding. We have analysed the meaning and features of social welfare administration. We have discussed nature and scope of social welfare administration in a comprehensive manner and examined whether social welfare administration is a profession or not? We have also examined the

need of professionals/trained administrators in the implementation of social welfare programmes.

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