

## **Social Action as a Method of Social Work**

In the beginning, profession of social work has not given much importance either to the education or the practice of social action. The major concerns of professional social workers have been often restricted to remedial and rehabilitative objectives. The perception was that there were certain individuals who were in need, there were some who required leisure time engagements through associations and groups, also those who needed better community services through coordination and cooperation. The methods used to address these groups were Social Case work, Group work and Community Organization. Traditionally, social workers worked within the existing traditional system which included providing social services and implementing government programmes and hardly ever challenged it. They functioned only as service providers and tried to maintain the status-quo in the society. When certain hindrances came up during the process of organizing community or providing some services, the social workers took the assistance of social action strategies as part of Community Organization.

During the 1970s and early 80s it was realized that the western welfare model was not capable of solving all the socio-economic problems of individuals, groups and the society at large. Hence, the profession of social work in developing countries started shifting its orientation from welfare approach of social work to that of change and alternate development. It was also realized that development and upliftment of people was not possible without bringing about structural changes in the society and that the primary methods of social work were not appropriate enough to bring about the required change.

In due course, social workers started to think about incorporating social action as a separate method of social work. To meet the challenges of the given situation, the social workers now started functioning as change agents and aimed at preventing a problem instead of resolving it. Thus, the importance of

social action was realized and its process and strategies adopted by social workers as a separate method of social work.