

## SOCIAL WORK AS A PROFESSION

In recent years, there has been fact that tackling social problems and helping individuals in the present society demand special knowledge and skills in addition to personal qualities of sympathy, understanding and self sacrifice. The necessary knowledge and skills can be obtained through training. Also, it is considered that since the work of helping people is an essential social function and social workers should be paid for their services.

Generally medicine, law and technology are known professions and in these categories social work also has established its relevance and has all the features required for a profession. But there is a debate about calling social work as a profession. It seems, therefore, essential to define and explain 'profession'.

### **Meaning of profession:**

A profession is an occupation which requires a higher educational qualification, degree, diploma or certificate. Sometimes, it is taken as an occupation involving some ethics for working. A profession keeps a body of knowledge and skills, an area of operation, a code of ethics, and a certain degree of organization among the members of the profession.

Millerson discussed following traits in a profession which he has found from other twenty one (21) writers:

1. Skills based on theoretical knowledge.
2. Provision of training and occupation.
3. Tests of the competence of members
4. Organization
5. Devotion to professional code of conduct
6. Altruistic Service.

### **Professional Traits in Social Work**

There are some necessary and common characteristics derived from definitions and practice of social work by many social scientists:

#### **Systematic and Scientific Knowledge:**

Social work is based on scientific knowledge. It views man as a biological, social and psychological entity. Behavior of man can be explained in terms of certain needs, natural or acquired, which originate in social and psychic aspects of his personality. The role of social worker is mainly to set a process of interaction. His methodology relates to ways by which individuals and groups/societies can be made self-reliant and self dependent.

The area of knowledge covered in social work can be grouped as follows:

1. **Human behavior and social environment:** personality factors, theories, social aspects, psychiatric aspects, human relations, groups, social institutions, socialization, social control, environment, etc.
2. **Methods and techniques of social work:** case work, group work, community organization, social administration, social action and research.
3. **Fields of social work:** medical, psychiatric, child guidance, health, correctional, family, youth, labor, rural development, etc.
4. **Social problems:** crimes, delinquency, drug addiction, beggary, unemployment, corruption, etc.

Social work has developed certain well defined principles which guide its practice. Social work believes in individual's worth and dignity.