

Social Welfare in U.S.A

The pattern of social welfare or social services in America owes much to its mother land England. Most of the immigrants of America came from England. They brought with them the laws, the social systems and pattern of social services existing in the England. The kinship and neighborhood groups assisted the needy relatives and neighbors to the extent of their capacities. From the very beginning, the Local Government assumed the responsibility of helping the paupers who had no relatives. Outdoor relief was given to the poor in their own homes. Alms houses were established to give indoor relief to the disabled poor. The first alms house established in 1622 began to work as workhouse for able-bodied poor from the year 1685. The beginning of free charity was made with the establishment of the Boston Latin, school in 1644.

Care of the ailing, another early development was associated with alms house. The origin of some of the leading hospitals of today, such as Bellevue Hospital in New York goes back to early poor houses in America. Pennsylvania Hospital was the first hospital for the poor with physical and mental diseases. In the field of child welfare, the beginning was made with the establishment of an institution in 1729 in New Orleans by the Ursuline sisters for the children of parent's mass murder by Indians. In 1790, an orphanage was established in Charleston, South Carolina for children whose parents were dead.

Depression of 1863 and After

The great Depression of 1863 and the Civil War in the United States were followed confusion and many personal, family and community problems. With a view to tackling these problems and meeting community needs,

Charity Organization Movement was started in America. This movement was successful in establishing some private agencies and community welfare councils. These councils staffed by efficient social workers made attempt to understand community needs, chalk out plans and to execute these plans. The first Charity Organization Society in the United States was started in Buffalo in the year 1877.

Another significant development in the field of social services in the U.S.A. has been that of the Settlement house which also was started first in England. The first Settlement house, in America was established in the city of New York in 1886. Similar neighborhood centers were also established in different parts of the country. These centers aimed at providing recreational, health and welfare services for boys and girls, youngmen and women particularly in areas inhabited by the poor. The most significant achievement of the state public welfare officials was the organization of State Boards of Charities and Correction. It was organized to assume the responsibility of the dependent, the defective and the delinquent.

Social Security Act

The Federal Government enacted the massive, Social Security Act in 1935 and assumed a major responsibility of assisting the needy. The Social Security Act which virtually converted America into a welfare state had three parts.

- a) Social Insurance
- b) Public Assistance
- c) Health Social Welfare.

The last one specially emphasizing on child welfare this act was passed to provide old age insurance, federal and state an employment insurance, grants-in-aid to states for old age assistance, aid to families of dependent children, aid to the blind and services for helping maternal and child health, crippled children, vocational rehabilitation and soon.

An important change took place in social security legislation with the enactment of public welfare amendments of 1962. Here for the first time the importance of preventive, protective and rehabilitative services would in public welfare was significantly recognized by providing a formula under which 75 percent of the costs of such services would be met from federal funds.

At present social welfare work is being carried on in America under three auspices.

- Federal, state and local government
- Voluntary agencies
- Church missions

A major step in the development of social welfare in America has been the rapid growth of the profession of social work since the turn of the 20th century. There has been rapid increase in number of the trained social workers in America.