Chapter II
Social Work Profession in India

The previous chapter was set to furnish overviews of basic components of stress process. Following that, possible sources of stress (stressors) were explained and their changing nature in contemporary occupational scenario was portrayed. Further, major stress theories/models and approaches to understand coping from stress were discussed. In addition, the significance of individual differences in the process of work stress and coping was explained.

In this background, now it is appropriate to be specific and discuss literature pertaining to social work profession and its various aspects so as to provide information about occupational stress and coping of professional social workers. Moreover, an attempt has been made to discuss core matters in the Indian context.

Accordingly, the review of literature is based on discussion of the impact of globalisation on social work profession in general and its effects on Indian social work in particular. This chapter provides insights into the professional status of social workers in India mainly on the lines with affiliation of professional status by public, social work subject’s own knowledge base and regulation of this knowledge. Regulation of knowledge includes formal training of social work, role of associations of social work, code of ethics to follow, professional status and remuneration for services. It discusses studies on work stress among professional social workers and possible sources of stress in the social work profession. It points out the individual differences in the stress process on the basis of age, work experience, gender and work setting. It also provides insights into the role of social support in the process of stress and coping in social work profession.

I. Globalisation and social work profession

Globalisation is not only associated with finance and business in the world, but it has its connection and effects on individuals and their families, their various aspects of life and their various roles. As an effect of globalisation, the public sector has been replaced with private sector resulting in deterioration/changes of individual roles, discrimination against vulnerable groups, etc. This changing scenario has created immense difficulties for social workers who were expected not only to respond to the deleterious effects of globalization on local communities but also to make a critical analysis of the dialectics of local and global factors (Alphonse, George and Moffatt, 2008).
Similarly, Narayan, (2008) argued the need to ‘indigenise’ and to ‘internationalise’ social work practice simultaneously to meet the demands of globalisation. Further, globalisation highlights the need to attend global standards in social work training and practice. Considering that, the International Association of Schools of Social Work and International Federation of Social Work drafted criteria for social work training and practice (Alphonse, et al., 2008). The international social work embraced and set new guidelines for social work practice as a response to globalisation which support the UN declaration of human rights and integrated human right perspective to their definition (Caragata and Sanchez, 2002; Cox, 2000, both as cited in Alphonse, et al., 2008; Nadkarni, 2011).

In India, the third review committee set up by University Grant Commission (UGC) for the review of social work education published a model curriculum for social work education, focusing on social development perspectives, in December 2001. However, adoption to this model curriculum by schools/colleges of social work in India is very slow in the absence of any strict implementing or regulating social work organisation or association. Further, most of the institutions of social work follow the old curriculum (Nadkarni, 2011).

Alphonse, M., et al., 2008 also lay emphasis on shortcomings of current practice of social work profession, particularly in India and highlight the need to qualify students to deal with social problems in the globalised context. The authors also claim that with these changes the social work profession needs to undergo a change as per the market forces. These market forces are often characterised by prevalence of cut-throat competition in the job market and job insecurity which eventually expose the social workers to the emerging psycho-social risks in their profession.

II. Implication of globalisation for social work profession and training in India

In India the period of liberalisation and privatisation along with globalisation has brought major changes in human life and society at large which are both positive and negative. There are instabilities with rapid changes in every sphere of human life which has affected the practices and thoughts of Indian social workers (Nadkarni, 2011).

Professional social work practice involves logical application of its principles, values and skills so as to bring transformation in challenging situations of society and of individuals. Due to privatisation and globalisation, there is an emergence of new forms of repression in
India (Narayan, 2008). Rapid economic socio-cultural changes negatively affect the lives of women, minority groups, under-privileged children and poor (Nadkarni, 2011). Further, a large gap between technological advances and conventional approaches of Indian society makes the situation more complex (Narayan, 2008).

Social, cultural and economic contextual frame of India is diverse with high heterogeneity of culture, language, religion and ethnic surroundings. Moreover, unpredictable swiftness of transformation makes the scenario of industrial development extremely complicated to have chief formulation for professional social work training and practice. These chaotic and complex realities can easily confuse social work fraternity. As a result, social work training in India is collapsing and messy about its identity (Bodhi, 2011).

These concerns laid down by Bodhi, 2011, actually echoed the similar concerns raised by Siddiqui way back in 2001. Siddiqui, (2001) talked about whether social work training and practice should endorse a micro level approach (client-based) or macro level (issue-based) approach. Further, there were disagreements about whether one should be all-purpose social worker or a specialised social worker. Moreover, the lack of indignation of social work practice and a convenient negligence towards a need to uniform or universalise the social work practice were still glaring shortcomings in social work and are still the unresolved concerns. Pawar (1999) mentioned about the need to rejuvenate the social work practice in India on the lines of changing scenario at the global level. He further cautioned that social work in India would get isolated and turn immaterial to the forces of liberalization and market economy.

Current social work practice in India needs to take into account the challenges put on its economy and culture catalysed by liberalisation and privatisation. The professional social work practice should be focussed on strong description of profession while the aims of social work both at national and international forums. There is a need to redefine the social work practice in order to make it responsive to contextual needs and to be tolerant to the impact of globalisation. This requires to be done with a clear vision of Indian context and experiences (Alphonse et al., 2008; Narayan, 2008). Contextual social work practice needs to constantly appraise its functioning in order to accommodate the needs of the ever changing society (Narayan, 2008).

Given the scenario, the distrust raised by Nadkarni (2011) in relation to social work practice and education to answer these rapid changes are found to be appropriate. Nadkarni, (2011)
also expressed the need for speedy and suitable changes in professional social work practice in India to address the above mentioned implications of changing economy and socio-cultural aspects of the Indian society.

**III. Professional status of social work**

Under the impact of international social work, there has been a great demand for social work to be given a professional status. This is largely because of its increased role in the global context and its constant struggle for identity at a time when there is recognition for it in several countries. According to the International Association of Schools of Social Work and International Federation of Social Workers (2002), now social work is being practised in varied settings and in many different countries. It is now been practised in 144 countries. This has sometimes led to cross border comparisons of its various features (Weiss-gal and Welbourne, 2008).

Increasing concern for social work as a profession can be discussed under two distinct theoretical frameworks, guiding the difference between professional and non-professional occupations. These two approaches are ‘attribute approach’ and ‘power approach’. The ‘Attribute’ approach examines the profession in the light of its contribution to the society and its capability to respond to contemporary social changes and to attend its goals through its distinctive features. The latter differentiate profession from occupation (Hall, 1994; Macdonald, 1995 cited in Weiss-gal and Welbourne, 2008) and also give power and control to the profession in a professional hierarchy. Thus, any profession can be defined as occupation when it has achieved dominance in its functioning through development of skills and training to its members, authorises and also provides autonomy to its members to render their service to the beneficiaries (Freidson, 1970; Johnson 1972, both cited in Weiss-gal and Welbourne, 2008). The power approach, on the other side, explains how the profession, if it has to be an occupation, has first claim of rights, domination and competence over a certain set of skills and services. Power approach based on sociological dialogue of the nature of the profession focuses on its dominance in its area of practice. Power approach identifies the ‘professional boundary’ which gives an exclusive right and monopoly to an individual to perform certain type of work in an occupation (Macdonald, 1995 cited in Weiss-gal and Welbourne, 2008).

As a strong follower of attribute/trait approach, Greenwood (1957) (cited in Shetty, 1996; Weiss-gal and Welbourne, 2008) identified five important characteristics of profession on the
basis of which he identified social work as a semi profession. Greenwood, (1981) (cited in Shetty, 1996) also suggested that the attribute of any profession should be understood in the form of continuum, thus professionalism could be understood as a degree progression on this attribute continuum/scale instead of constellation of traits/attributes at one point. Later many other traits were added to move towards professionalization of social work but there was no common consent over its essential traits which would classify it as a full-fledged profession.

These five attributes identified by Greenwood, (1957) (cited in Shetty, 1996; Weiss-gal, and Welbourne 2008) are: (1) community sanction, (2) systematic body of knowledge, (3) regulatory code of ethics, (4) professional authority recognised by its clientele, and (5) professional culture sustained by formal professional associations. Along with attribute approach, power approach has also been central to the study of social work as a profession (Abbott, 1995; Hall, 1994 both as cited in Weiss-gal and Welbourne, 2008).

Weiss-gal and Welbourne (2008) on the basis of these two approaches discuss the professional status of social work in ten difference countries, viz., Chile, Germany, Hungary, India, Mexico, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, the UK and the USA. Their study indicated that in most of the countries few of the professional characteristics were common like the formation of professional associations, social work training through higher education institutions, development of code of ethics and development of specific body of knowledge. They also highlighted other concerns like use of the title of social work, implementation of code of ethics, licensing procedures and regulation of formal training, etc., across the countries (Weiss-gal and Welbourne, 2008). All these features were common among the ten countries studied but were present in varying degrees. The study brought greater clarity about the growth of social work and its development as a profession in varied settings. Since not many such studies are available, this is a pioneering respectable and exclusive attempt based on empirical literature and views of experts from each country. However, each country was represented by only one social work expert who was also a social work educator. These educators were asked to contribute to the study on the basis of their publications and their degree of acquaintance with the issue in their respective countries.

This approach helped to have an unbiased representation and scope for varied experiences from different social work practitioners. These practitioners were actually trying to execute specific characteristics of social work as a profession and trying to gain mastery over their occupations. The study had not reviewed the empirical literature from each country in an in-
depth manner so as to have sound understanding pertaining to prevailing professional status of social work. Had this been considered, it would have given directions and recommendations from the countries where the social work is developed and established as a profession.

To draw a scenario about the prevailing professional status of social work in India, the present study is considering a base derived from the combined factors taken from the study of Weiss-gal and Welbourne, (2008) and from the understanding of attribute and power approaches. Further, it attempts to extend these professional features by discussing empirical studies and literature in the Indian context only and compares it with other relevant literature whenever required.

III. A Professional status of social work in India

As discussed above, as there is an ever increasing demand for international social work in the backdrop of globalisation, it is important to indigenise the way of doing it by addressing the local/contextual variations of issues. For multi-heterogeneous counties like India where there are variations of culture, language, caste, religion, etc, it becomes more important and necessary (Alphonse, et al., 2008; Bodhi, 2011; Narayan, 2008; Shetty, 1996). At the same time, it becomes utmost important for social work to have a professional outlook in its practices. The study while attempting to look into the struggle of social work practitioners in terms of occupational stress, in this section tries to explain the Indian situation by highlighting certain related pertaining issues as follows:

III. A.1 Acknowledgment of professional prestige by public

Public recognition for any profession depends on a number of factors which could be attributed to it by the society like whether the society feels the worth of the role played by that profession (Siddiqui, 2001; Weiss-gal and Welbourne, 2008). Moreover the profession should be enjoying a formal status so as to have a public recognition. According to Siddiqui, (2001) in India social work does not have recognition as a profession. The public still associates it with charity. Individuals who engage themselves voluntarily are also known as social workers. Similarly, Weiss-gal and Welbourne, (2008) mention the absence of licensing process for the trained social workers in India as in Sweden and Hungary. In addition there were no restrictions on the use of the designation ‘social worker’ in the country.
Unlike the USA and UK, there are no efforts/plans/strategies from official associations of professional social workers to improve/upgrade their image in India (Weiss-gal and Welbourne, 2008). Consequently it has become difficult for social workers to correct the notion that ‘social work’ or ‘social workers’ do not need any scholarly training to practice (Siddiqui, 2001). This definitely becomes a kind of challenge for social workers to deal with during the course of their occupation.

III. A.2 Characteristic knowledge base and techniques of social work

In most of the countries studied by Weiss-gal and Welbourne, knowledge base was developed by the combination of foreign knowledge (mostly developed in the USA) and indigenous knowledge. However, in countries where cultural and economic conditions are different from those prevailing in USA and UK, a struggle between the foreign and indigenous knowledge is observed. This is true of countries like Chile, Mexico, India, South Africa and Hungary (Weiss-gal and Welbourne, 2008). There is a shortage of indigenous social work literature in India (Siddiqui, 2001). In the beginning itself, social work education was influenced by British and American schools of social work (Mandal, 1989; Nagpual, 1993; Pawar, 1999) and based on Judeo-Christian ideas of professional social work practices (Kuruvilla, 2005 as cited by Bodhi, 2011).

As a result, huge gap was always felt between the theory and practices of social work in India. Although there has been attempt to modify and develop contextual literature, India being so heterogeneous in culture and other aspects of human life being so varied, a common content would not be sufficient to address the problems of all regions (Narayan, 2008).

As per the study by Weiss-gal and Welbourne, (2008) in countries like India and Spain there have been efforts for knowledge development, but the publications and research in regard to it is happening at a slow pace. In India, similar concerns were shared by Pawar, (1999). Bodhi, (2011) cites efforts of many pioneering social work experts and educators (like Dasgupta, 1968; Desai, A., 1985; Desai M., 2004; Gore, 1965; Saldanha, 2008; Siddique, 1987 and many others) who have raised concerns and have put efforts for the indigenisation of social work practice in India. Bodhi, (2011) projected a gloomy picture about the fruitless efforts by the Indian social work fraternity for trying to develop indigenous knowledge base in India in the light of complexities offered by its multi-heterogeneity.
III.A. 3 Regulation of training of knowledge and techniques

Weiss-gal and Welbourne found that in all the ten countries under study had developed educational system to deliver social work training. Only in India non-university-based diploma in social work is offered. Moreover, certificate/diploma and degree in social work are given through distance education mode. Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) was the first which came up with this idea. Initially there was hesitation in the social work fraternity about the idea, but later on due to persistent efforts and support to the notion that social work training can be given through distant mode as well as ambivalence in general, finally various regional centres were developed with the support of other social work colleges and departments imparting certificate, diploma, degree and doctoral level studies. However there is no proper evaluation of the quality of these courses and about the social workers who are getting degrees from distant mode (Nadkarni, 2011).

In all the ten countries studied (Chile, Germany, Hungary, India, Mexico, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, the UK and the USA) Weiss-gal, and Welbourne, (2008) found that there was active council or formal body regulating the educational standards of social work unlike of India where there is no separate body to regulate this task. In India there is one autonomous body called National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) to grade institutions of higher education. Depending on its report, the University Grant Commission (UGC) releases funds to the institutions (Nadkarni, 2011). NAAC also is involved in quality assessments and enhancement activities. Along with Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), it conducted a seminar in regard to the standards for assessment of quality in social work education in 2003. Report of that seminar came in 2005 in the form of a manual comprising guideline about the quality assessments and capacity-building of social work institutions in India (Tirmare, 2013). However, in India the accreditation is not compulsory due to which many private and self-supported social work courses are run on capitation fees with minimum quality assured (Nadkarni, 2011).

The UGC has also made recommendations for the upgradation of social work education. In past 75 years, three reviews of social work education were conducted. Reports of the first two reviews came up in 1965 and 1980 respectively. However the report of third review committee is report is still pending.

The first report of University Grant Commission (1965) stated about specialisation of subjects in social work training for specific jobs in a field to have para-professionals. It also
favoured the development of knowledge base best suited in the Indian context. It also recommended better teaching, research and library facilities. It supported the efforts to build social work as a profession.

The second report of the University Grant Commission (1980) further emphasised the development of indigenous knowledge systematically. It looked more into the strengthening of social work academic programmes. It is surprising that this report did not favour specialisation of subjects in social work training as per the non-availability of job according the specialisation in which students were trained, non-suitability to the needs of the region, etc. (Desai, 1991 cited by Nadkarni, 2011).

There have been changes in the curriculum as per the recommendations of first and second reports. But they were at a very slow pace and that too, not all the recommendations were fully implemented (Pawar, 1999; Pathak, 2000; Siddiqui, 2001, Narayan, 2001). Most of the schools are still following specialised courses and offering traditional specialisation as labour welfare and personnel management, medical and psychiatric social work, etc. There are conflicting opinions in social work fraternity about generic verses specialisation courses in social work training. Tata institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai was the first institution which did not support labor welfare as a part of social work curriculum. However, it is given as a specialised subject in most of the schools and colleges of social work in India (Nadkarni, 2011).

The third review of social work education by UGC was done in 1990 but the final report is still pending. In December 2001 the UGC finally published the model curriculum for social work education, which has again not been implemented by all the schools and colleges of social work in India.

On a regular basis, concern has been expressed for social work standards but efforts have not been fully satisfactory. This may be the reason for echoing of similar sort of thoughts and anxieties in regard to social work education in India. For instance, in one of the national seminars conducted by National Association of Professional Social Worker in India (NAPSWI) Sehgal, (2011) pointed out the sub-standard of social work education, absence of syllabus updating procedure, poor filed work infrastructure and absence of a regulating body to keep check and non-implementation of model curriculum for social work education suggested by UGC. She also expressed concern about mushrooming of social work
institutions and admission of students through capitation fees. She also expressed anxiety about recruitment of unqualified staff like persons not having degrees in social work but engaged in teaching it.

Similar concern was raised by Nadkarni, (2011) when she expressed her discomfort at the deteriorating in the quality of social work training due to the establishment of business-oriented institutions in an unplanned manner. Nadkarni, (2011) further reports that there were 200 schools and colleges awarding various social work degrees till 2006 as per the estimate of social work and education cell of TISS. By 2009 the number would have gone to 300 approximately. Further she states that the courses offered by these colleges are not in accordance with the needs of the region. Thus, the social work programmes of these colleges are unplanned and not healthy for the overall profession in India.

Explaining the situation, it is time to have the National Council of Professional Social Work to regulate and strengthen the professional growth of social work education in India (Sehgal, 2012). Way back in 1993 a bill on national council for professional social work was drafted by Association of Schools of Social Work in India (ASSWI) but in vain and till date further has not been made (Nadkarni, 2011; Sehgal, 2012).

III. A.4 Official associations of social work

Although the official associations like ASSWI and Indian Association of Trained Social Workers (IATSW) came into existence in 1960s, to a larger extent both the associations were not successful in addressing various issues related to social work practice in India (Siddiqui, 2001). ASSWI worked successfully for the enhancement of social work education till 1986. It also came up with the above mentioned bill, but due to the absence of unanimity in social work fraternity it did not moved further. Later in 1998, efforts were made to make ASSWI functional, but again in vain (Tirmare, 2013).

At present there are few national associations struggling to move the wheel again like National Network of Schools of Social Work (NNSSW) and National Association of Professional Social Workers in India (NAPSWI). NNSSW came into existence in 2005. It was initiated by the cell for social work education and practice of TISS Mumbai. It started with zone meetings calling social work educators and practitioners for discussions about improvement in the social work education and practice (Nadkarni, 2012). NAPSWI was registered in 2005. It is an active Association launching academic programmes like seminar,
conference and workshops for social work educators and practitioners, and also looking forward to redraft the bill for proposed national council (Shegal, 2012).

Other than these, there is Maharashtra Association of Social Work Education (MASWE), which is working for the Maharashtra bill of professional social workers for the registration and licensing of social workers in coordination with Bombay Association of Trained Social Workers (Nadkarni, 2012, Tirmare, 2013). Other than these associations there is one more pioneering association which was established in 1970 by the name Indian Society of Psychiatric Social Work. In the year 1988 its name was changed to Indian Society for Professional Social Workers (ISPSW) There were difficulties in active participation from the association for the issues related to social work practice in India though to its credit there were organisations of total 33 conference on various themes related to social work so far (Shenoy, 2013).

However, unfortunately like the associations of other countries like Germany and Hungary, these associations do not work in coordination with each other. Additionally, they do not play the role of a trade union, the way they do it in Germany, and just limit their functions to regulating salary and employment conditions of social workers. They are also not active when it comes to advocacy required to be done at policy levels in the best interest of their beneficiaries (Weiss-gal and Welbourne, 2008). There are many other regional associations of social workers in India but at the national level more efforts are needed to regularise social work as profession.

III. A.5 Code of ethics to practice the social work profession

Weiss-gal and Welbourne (2008) found that in all the countries they studied except India, there were ethical codes to practice social work. The Indian Government has not recognised any formal body or has not declared the uniform code of ethics which will be applicable all over India. But being a country with many odds like social discrimination, corruption, lack of common perspectives on social issues, limited power to social workers and lack of support from society and professional groups Indian social workers are in a professional ethical dilemma and they need guidance for their professional behaviour (Vargheses, 2008).

In 1997 Social Work Educators’ Forum (SWEF) at TISS, Mumbai developed and declared a code of ethics for professional social workers in India. It was based on human values and contemporary social realities considering the intrinsic worth of all human and non-human life. It provides general ethical principles to be followed by social workers with respect to
self, profession, work, society, co-workers, organisations, etc. (SWEF, 1997). But it is unfortunate that in India importance is not given to the code of ethics and so there is no support to efforts made to deal with ethical dilemmas arising while practicing social work. Curriculum of social work in India has not paid enough attention to the methods of ethical code for social workers during their professional career. Social work training in India does not prepare social work aspirants adequately to face the ethical dilemmas arising while performing their professional duties (Vargheses, 2008).

Literature related to ethical dilemmas faced by the social workers during their career suggests that these ethical dilemmas become the source of occupational stress for them. Marcia, (2000) specified that ethical dilemmas affect social workers harmfully at various levels. Similarly, Corley, Minick, Elswick and Jacobs, (2005) write that occupational stress related to professional ethics affects physical, emotional and psycho-social life of social workers. McAuliffe (2005) in his interview with Australian social workers found that the expression of ethical dilemmas and associated feelings of agitation, irritation, depression, etc., were common among them. Given the situation it, therefore, becomes crucial to reorganise and pay attention to the training and regulation of professional ethics of social work in India.

III. A.6 Remuneration implications on professional standing

In India social workers have less salaries and status as compared with other human service/helping professions. Similar is the case in Hungary, Mexico, Germany and Spain. In India the possible reasons for lower wages and status may be the lack of support by the Government, and also because of individuals active in social work without formal training in it, etc. Other possible reasons are the non-specific and wide-ranging definition that social work has in India (as in Germany) and the lack of awareness that social work needs formal training and skills (similar is the case in Mexico, Sweden and Germany) (Weiss-gal and Welbourne, 2008).

There are a few studies exploring the employment status of social workers in India. They are considered to be pioneering in this field (like Nair, 1983 at Tamil Nadu; Pathak, 1983 at UP-Delhi; Ramachandran and Padmanabha, 1969 at national level; Ramachandran, 1977 at Mumbai). There is a huge gap of research exploring the nature of jobs and difficulties of career settlement for social workers. Similarly, Pawar (1999) and Siddiqui (2001) point out the lack of guidance about professional life and unstable careers of professional social workers in India.
In regard to remunerations of social workers in India it is rightly pointed out by Nadkarni (2011) that mounting cost of living puts them in the great dilemma of having a highly paid jobs or to work on low salaries in development sectors without keeping their own carrier aspirations low.

Given the scenario of social work practice and its regulation in India, it is necessary to take some serious steps in this regard. Bodhi, (2011) expressed worries about the lack of self-exploration and absence of zeal to look into the gaps of existing social work practice. He also articulated that most of the exertions in regard to resolution of complications of social work educations are from critically thinking social workers who had sensed the threat from traditional social work practices.

From the review of literature, it is evident that there have been continued efforts for improving the social work educational standards, and there have been timely and consistent concerns expressed for developing social work by way of strengthening social work knowledge base. But there is an absence of discussion about trained human resources in social work (having formal degrees of social work) trying to establish themselves as professional social workers in India. There is again a dearth of empirical research and even reviews of research and concepts/theories which discuss employment conditions, occupational hardships and work experiences of social workers during their career after getting formal degrees in social work.

In the initial phase of growth of social work as a profession in India, as stated above, there were studies conducted by the founding members of social work. However, much time has passed, and issues and contexts have changed, globalisation has set in and hence it becomes imperative to update the knowledge accordingly by assessing the present competitive job environment. Additionally, there is a need to have perspectives which could portray the occupational pressure being felt by social workers, which again is seen embedded in the complexity of identity struggle of social work profession in the country.

In this context, it would be appropriate to discuss the work stress in social work profession, sources of work stress and its nuance in the form of individual differences in the profession of social work. It would also be proper to discuss coping by the social workers when there is occupational stress in the profession.
IV. Work stress among social work professionals

Human services are mainly concerned with human beings embedded in their multi-faceted world of complications of relationships and related emotionally sensitive situations (Dollard, 2003). This clearly indicates the possibility of emotionally multi-faceted demands of the job, which may put an individual worker in a state of conflict and nervousness. Such a situation calls for an in-depth study of the issues. Surprisingly, many researchers have mentioned the lack of systematic and scientific insights into the stress being felt by social workers (Collings and Murray, 1996; Gibson, McGrath and Reid, 1989; Soderfeldt, M., Soderfeldt, B. and Warg, 1995; Taylor-Brown, Johnson, Hunter, and Rockowitz, 1981; Thompson, Stradling, Murphy and O’Neill, 1996). According to Dollard, (2003) work-related feelings of anxiety in social workers lead to depression and burnout. Similarly, Lloyd, King and Chenoweth, (2002) mentioned that high levels of role ambiguity and role conflict put social workers into professional stress and burnout. He further elaborated that the job environment of social workers expects them to resolve difficulties of clients even in the absence of sufficient resources and less power to take decisions on their own. In this situation, it becomes all the more stressful for them to meet the needs of the clients which are embedded into multiple complexities of social realities. Moreover, he observed high variability in stress of social workers due to their diversified roles.

Further, in this chapter an attempt has been made to present various sources of stress in social work profession. While reviewing the literature, the researcher came to know about the fact that in India there is a dearth of studies presenting the occupational stress of social workers. As stated in the statement of the problem (SOP) of the research that there are few studies in India (details given under SOP, pages 42-45) which attempt to explain the employment conditions of social workers. However, these studies are limited to portray the employment conditions and profiles of social workers in India. They do not present the main construct of stress and coping. The present chapter aims to review the research exclusively pertaining to stress and coping of social workers in India. Overseas research has been discussed to highlight the difficulties of social workers in their occupation. Contemporary professional status of social workers discussed above gives an idea about the plight of trained social workers in their occupations in India.
V. Sources of stress in social work profession

There are multiple sources of stress which have found multiple references in the related literature. According to Dollard (2003), these sources can be grouped into various categories like issues related to work load and roles, low levels of autonomy in work, organizational climate and structure and work place violence and conflict.

Role stressors are recognised in the literature as an individual and organizational stressor. Secondly, in social work profession, individuals face difficulties to know what is expected out from their job/work duties. It is also found that many times their work goes unrecognised by others (Kadushin, and Kulys, 1995). This indicates a strong presence of role stress in this profession mainly in the form of role ambiguity, role conflict and role overload. Here role ambiguity means lack of clarity regarding job responsibilities, role conflict comprises of inappropriate demands which do not come under a defined job profile and role overload can be understood as an excess of duties or very complex responsibilities which need skills that are taxing for an individual (Dillon, 1990; Gilbar, 1998; Rushton, 1987). Among these, role ambiguity among social workers was the most recognised source of disappointment (Balloach, Pahl and McLean, 1998).

Role stress can be a precursor of stress (Brief and Aldag, 1976). The role stressors can be responsible for poor job performance (Beehr, Walsh and Taber, 1976), lack of self-reliance and may provoke someone to leave the job (Sutherland and Cooper, 1991; Um and Harrison, 1998). Moreover continued conflicts with demands of role in an organization can lead to anxiety, job dissatisfaction and psychological withdrawal from organizational activities.

High workloads in combination with low control over jobs, lesser decision latitude and lack of resources were found to be challenging to deal for the social workers. These all together have a combined effect in the form of high levels of stress and job dissatisfaction (Dollard, 2003).

Under organisational stressors, Cushman, Evans and Namerow, (1995) found that bureaucratic work environment, lack of adequate staff, irregular funding and neglected association with other work units were the most recognised stressors. Similarly, low self-esteem, lack of proper resources/infrastructure to accomplish the given work task, and differences in values with the organization can also lead to higher levels of stress (Bradley and Sutherland, 1995). As explained by Dollard (2003), poor relationship between employer–
employee can be challenging for the workers. Moreover, biased job selection and unfair organisational process can be a cause of work stress.

In case of violence at work place, Pamela and Julie (1996) stated that it is a common phenomenon though it is often believed that work/professional places are most of the time safe and explicit aggressive behaviour is very rare. One can see various forms of violence taking place like sexual harm, destruction and belligerence, etc. In addition to the general category of bodily harm, overt behaviour like verbal threats, psychological abuse and creating nuisance could also be other major forms of violence and should also be taken into consideration. Pamela and Julie (1996) emphasized lack of employers’ attention to the underlying reasons of violence like poor communication among employees, pressure to increase productivity and other stress factors. Ringstad (2005) in his California-based study reported that a majority (86 per cent, n - 885) of the 1,029 social workers responding to the survey had experienced some type of violence from clients during their career in social work. The psychological aggression including threats, verbal abuse and property destruction were more common than the actual physical assault.

Further, when compared to other human service workers, social workers are found to have higher stress and burnout and this can be the result of lack of autonomy in jobs, rigid roles and because of complex choices they have to make as a part of their work (Dollard, 2003).

VI. Coping among trained social workers

In the discipline of psychology, there is great advancement in the area of coping by human beings in different situations (Valtonen, Sogren, and Cameron-Padmore, 2006). But there are few studies focusing on coping styles of social workers to shed off their stress (Latack., 1986; Um and Harrison 1998). Though the coping style of social workers in their job has a significant effect on job performance and satisfaction, still it is an area which has remained unexplored to a great extent (Um and Harrison 1998).

Whatever literature is available, it indicates different ways of coping among social workers (Thompson, Murphy and Stradling, 1994). Satyamurti (1981) reports practical approaches and other coping ways ranging from positive and negative avoidance of the stress situation among social workers in their profession. Fineman (1985) discusses efforts of social workers to change/ redefine the emotional meaning attached to the stressful encounters as the prominent style of handling stress in their occupation.
VII. Variations in occupational stress and coping (individual characteristics)

VII. A. Age, work experience and coping from occupational stress

Many studies reveal that as age increases, the coping from job stress becomes better (Sager, 1990). Younger people have higher levels of stress as compared with aged in a job (Ben-Bakr et al., 1995; Dua, 1994; Sharpley et al., 1996). Moreover, younger employees may have feelings of depersonalization, emotional exhaustion and disengagement in their job (Sharpley et al., 1996). On the other hand, for older people the possible reasons for this could be the attainment of career maturity by making them less stressed (Dua, 1994). Some studies also reveal the decreasing use of confronting coping with increase in age (Folkman, Lazarus, Pimley & Novacek, 1987), when threat is perceived from the environment (Irion and Blanchard-Fields, 1987).

There are also some Indian studies acknowledging that the increasing age and work experience lead to better coping and decrease in work stress (Beena and Puduval, 1992; Chand and Monga; 2007; Chaturvedi and Purushothaman, 2009; Hunnar and Bagali, 2014).

Felton and Revenson (1987) found that older people reported to have less aggressive emotional expressions and were found seeking less social support. They also demonstrated positive reappraisal of the stressful situation among the older ones (Folkman, et al., 1987).

Ernest and Leslie (2004) point out that there is a need for an in-depth exploration when there are inconsistent results from exploration of the link between the numbers of years in job and emotional exhaustion. If the younger generation is more prone for burnout, then employers can take preventive measures by providing coping training to the new entrants. Moreover, if longer experience at a particular position in an organization leads to a decrease in burnout, then it would be valuable for employees to continue in one organisation instead of undertaking frequent job changes due to odd job situations (Stanton, R., Howard, and Seppo, 1998).

VII. B. Sex difference and coping from occupational stress

Many studies have claimed that there lie different methods of coping between males and females (Greenglass, 1991; Jick and Mitz., 1985; Stanton, A., Kirk, Cameron, and Danoff-Burg, 2000; Soderstrom et al., 2000). This is because the stress and stressors as such are perceived differently by males and females (Stanton, A., et al., 2000; Soderstrom et al.,
2000) and stress symptoms are experienced differently by them (Jick and Mitz., 1985). For these differences a number of factors are said to be responsible (Jick and Mitz, 1985; Greenglass, 1991).

Under the realm of emotion-focused coping, females are found to ventilate more to have improvement in performance. Although it may not be the case with males, they are more likely to exhibit negative ways of coping by indulging in destructive behaviour or are seen engaged in substance abuse like alcohol and drugs (Stanton, A., 2000).

Another pattern of coping between males and females as suggested by Burke and Belcourt (1974) and Ptacek, Smith and Zanas, (1992) is that males would be using problem-focused way of coping and females would be exhibiting emotion-focused way of coping more naturally and frequently. There are studies which found out that confidence in females is more or less based on their social relationships (Josephs, Markus and Tafarodi, 1992). Similarly, Stewart and Lykes (1985) suggested that interpersonal relations are more crucial for females than men as far as coping is concerned. Therefore, in case there are conflicts in social relationships, then it becomes more stressful for females as compared with males. These behaviours of males and females could be attributed to the socialisation process that they go through as a result of which males are made to deal with the situations in a pragmatic ways whereas females are made to learn the articulation of sentiments (Mainiero, 1986).

VII. C. Work setting and coping from occupational stress

Narayanan et. al., (1999) stated that there is a difference in ways of coping and perception about stressors among males and females coming from different professional settings, say for instance, clerical staff, sale associates and university teachers. They also reported that excess of work and lack of autonomy among clerical staff, and more of conflicts among sale associates and university teachers are perceived as stressors. These differences in perception of stressors may be because of the nature of their jobs. Hall (1989) and Karasek (1979) stated that professors enjoy more freedom in decision-making as a part of their job as compared with clerical workers.

There are differences in ways of coping based on rank of job as well like senior level job of an academician that can have more problem focused coping and subordinate level jobs may have more of emotion-focused coping (Menaghan and Merves, 1984).
VII. D. Social support and coping from occupational stress

Informal support in the form of family and friends provides a powerful way to deal with stress at job (Caplan, 1976) and minimize health-related problems due to stress (McMichael, 1978). There are various studies which support the positive effect of support from family and friends on health of individuals undergoing stress (Albrecht, Irey and Mundy, 1982; Cohen and Wills, 1985). Similarly, Lepore, Ragan and Jones (2000) explain that the ventilation of emotions leads to constructive alteration, giving a way out from the stressful situations and giving ways to an individual’s disturbed thoughts. But as stated by Barrera (1981) and Shinn, Lehmann & Wong (1984) support from family members and friends can also be a source of stress. This can be understood with the explanation given by Carver, Scheier and Weintraub (1989) that there can be two motives to look for social support, viz., one is to have discussion about possible solution of the stressful situation, and second to have emotional ventilation to have moral support in such a situation. Looking for this sort of emotional support can lead to the use of confronting coping but over use of it might create interruptions in seeking problem-focused coping (Carver et al., 1989).

VIII. Statement of the problem

According to Greenwood (1957), occupations can be distributed on a continuum scale like those which are considered as well-structured and well defined. These kinds of acknowledged professions take place on one side of the continuum, whereas occupations which require minimal skills and whose characteristics are not well-defined take place on the opposite extreme of the continuum. Remaining occupations with less expertise and undefined boundaries, but more so than the later would take place somewhere in the middle of the continuum.

Discussion about the professional status of social work occupation gives out diverse opinions. Greenwood (1957) considered social work occupation as a less advanced profession falling in moderate degree on continuum of professionalism. Moreover, for any occupation to be considered as a profession requires societal recognition and affiliation. However, this does not apply in the case of social work profession in India perhaps because those with no formal education in social work are also seen to be engaged in social causes at different levels in the society (Shetty, 1996; Siddiqui, 2001). Secondly India has had a long history of philanthropy where the wealthy are seen to be sharing some amount of their wealth with the poor and/or underprivileged. This type of charity work is a far cry from professionalism in India (Shetty, 1996).
1996; Siddiqui, 2001). Most of the time social work is considered to be an act of sympathy arising out of commonsense which anybody can do (Dillion, 1990). All this has created a mindset among people to consider social work as an individual’s choice to serve society and not as his/her profession or livelihood option.

Further, as discussed under section III of this chapter, it is very evident that social work occupation in India is striving to attend a professional status. It is manifest from the literature that social work in India has not acquired the major attributes of a profession. For instance, there is a constant struggle to have its own characteristic knowledge base and techniques (Bodhi, 2011; Mandal, 1989; Nagpual, 1993; Pawar, 1999; Siddiqui, 2001). There is a lack of well-organized official body for regulation of training of knowledge and techniques in India (Nadkarni, 2011; Narayan, 2001; Pawar, 1999; Pathak, 2000; Sehgal, 2011; Siddiqui, 2001). Further, there is need to strengthen official associations of social work in India (Shegal, 2012; Tirmare, 2013). There is also a pressing need to provide guidance to follow a code of ethics to practice social work profession in India (Vargheses, 2008). Moreover, in India social workers are paid less as compared with other human service professionals (Weiss-gal and Welbourne, 2008).

From the literature that is reviewed further, it is clear that social workers undergo various types of stressful events. First and foremost, it is their nature of job which puts them under considerable stress. Literature has identified high emotional demand of the social work profession and many other factors making it inherently stressful (Dollard, 2003). Moreover, they have to deal at a consistent level with the inherent high emotional demands, and conflicts and pressures of the profession (Coyle, Edwards, Hannigan, Fothergill and Burnard, 2005). Secondly, while going through the distress of others like clients, they also tend to feel certain distress within themselves. Lastly, they have to constantly undergo struggle and uncertainties when they are in this profession. As a result, many times most of the social workers feel stressed, suffer from low self-esteem and get confused between the expectations from their profession with their ideological understandings.

In the Indian context with regard to the problems faced by the social workers, very few studies have been conducted as mentioned above. There are gaps at the training level (Siddiqui, 2001). Further, there is no satisfactory support and guidance to potential professional social workers in regard to job placements (Pawar, 1999). In regard to employment status of social workers in India, in the last seven decades there were only four
studies published, viz., national level study by Ramachandran and Padmanabha (1969); Pathak (1983) for UP-Delhi; Nair (1983) for Tamil Nadu; and Ramachandran (1977) restricted to Mumbai. This has created a gap of empirical studies which could have been useful for the betterment of social workers and their profession. Unfortunately, not many such studies are available.

In a study conducted by Pathak, (1983) the aim was to know the status of social welfare personnel in social welfare agencies at Delhi and Uttar Pradesh. In particular, the study had the objective to recognize the available positions in the welfare agencies of the given area and to know the duties assigned to these positions. Further, the study tried to figure out the absorption of trained and untrained social welfare personnel in these agencies. Analysis of the study was majority-based on the preliminary level of statistics (i.e. Frequencies). Its major findings suggested that a majority of the social welfare personnel were employed in government organisations, and found social work training helpful in their jobs. Moreover, there was not any distinct policy for social welfare manpower.

A similar type of study was conducted by Nair in 1983 in Tamil Nadu which included both governmental and non-governmental organisations. Major objectives of the study were to recognise the social welfare positions and functions performed by social welfare manpower in the service sector of the social welfare. Another objective was to evaluate the performance and status of professional social workers employed in these organisations. Its major findings were that a majority of the social welfare personnel were untrained as most of the positions were filled by promotion notwithstanding provisions for direct recruitment. There were poor work conditions and low salaries. Further, Nair (1983) recommended a minimum professional qualification/training for employment in social welfare sector.

Both the studies of Pathak and Nair were mainly based on statistical frequencies. Accordingly, these studies provided only a description of the status of the social welfare personnel but were unable to provide in-depth analysis.

Another pioneering study is by Ramachandranin (1997) for greater Bombay which includes 323 social workers employed in various organisations. Its major findings indicate that most of the non-professional/ untrained social workers were working in family and child welfare settings, as well as in correctional settings. Trained social workers were employed in industrial and medical/psychiatric settings but they were not satisfied with their salaries.
Ramachandran suggested an appropriate social welfare manpower policy and emphasised requisite training of the social workers.

Though the above mentioned studies were milestones in regard to employment status of social workers in India, they do not carefully examine the hassles of occupation of social work with in-depth intricacies. They have focussed on the description of employment characteristics of social workers and of the agencies in which they were employed. The hassles faced by social workers in the form of work stress were not captured by these studies. Stress and coping are complex and multi-faced phenomena requiring logical investigation into the individual differences based on various stress and coping theories.

Further, there is empirical evidence with regard to disparities in work stress and its coping in relation to age and work experience (Ben-Bakr, Al-Shammari and Jefri, 1995; Dua, 1994; Sager, 1990; Sharpley, Reynolds, Acosta and Dua, 1996). There is a need for further in-depth investigation in regard to this particular phenomenon (Ernest and Leslie, 2004). Further, many studies found out differences in ways of coping among males and females (Greenglass, 1991; Jick and Mitz., 1985; Soderstrom, Dolbier, Leiferman, and Steinhardt, 2000; Stanton, A., et al., 2000). There can be differences in perception of stressor (Soderstrom et al., 2000; Stanton, A., et al., 2000) or stress symptoms experienced by males and females (Jick and Mitz., 1985). For these differences a number of factors could be responsible (Greenglass, 1991; Jick and Mitz., 1985) which need to be understood.

Similarly work setting or different professional settings are also considered to be moderators and meditators in the process of coping work stress (Hall, 1989; Menaghan and Merves, 1984; Narayanan, Menon and Paul, 1999).

In this background, the need is felt to investigate this dimension of professional social work in India, and to try to understand what kind of stresses social workers are undergoing and how they cope with them. Hopefully this study will throw light on different problems faced by social workers and their ways of coping, which can be helpful in changing the situation at work place. More specifically, the study hopes to identify sources of stress in the profession. This study examines how these stressors are related to the stress of the trained social workers and by what ways of coping they are dealt with in relation to individual differences in the form of socio-demographics characteristics of the trained social workers. Further, it attempts to bring out strategies at educational and organisational levels which can be helpful to prevent stress, particularly among the trained social workers in Indian context.
IX. Conclusion

Stress prevails in social work profession and professionals keep struggling to cope with it. In the Indian context there is a long way to go to see people addressing issues related with social work employment, its conditions and regulation. At present social work profession is seen struggling at various fronts, for instance, to blend international perspectives on social work practices with the indigenous knowledge and to get a professional status. Under such circumstances, the pleas of social workers in the backdrop of cut throat competition, increased job pressure, job insecurity and dearth of resources are ignored by all concerned. As a result, one sees the prevalence of stress and burnout among the professional social workers being discussed in the available literature. This chapter highlights the need to undertake such research and puts forward the aims of the proposed research with the hope to contribute significantly for the betterment of trained social workers working in the Indian context. In order to address this gap, there is a pressing need to explore the stress being felt by the social workers, common stressors present and ways of coping it. Lastly, it is important to look into the individual differences affecting the perceptions of stress and coping process.