### Chapter V

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CHAPTER V

DEVELOPMENT OF WEAKER SECTIONS: A SOCIAL WORK POINT OF VIEW

What is welfare? What sort of right is welfare? Is it the organization of service for those in 'need'? Or, is it a 'compromise between compassion and indifference' just as the two reflect our dispositions both to remember and to forget our 'social obligations'? (Pinker, 1971). Is it 'politics with a social orientation' that we take care of the poor, sick and vulnerable members of human society? (Unik, 1939) How, we may ask, is it possible to identify various activities escorted as 'welfare'? Henderson (1902) has provided a reasonable beginning to the discussion on welfare. He considers the basis of public relief as partly the race instinct of sympathy, partly reasoned benevolence, religious belief and ethical philosophy, partly a deliberate measure of social protection, partly a socialized form of mutual insurance against misfortune and accidental misery, to which fund all citizens contribute, and from which all who need are entitled to profit. (Timms and Watson, 1976: 3).

Welfare has come to stay and is a part of the social orientations in all societies. Welfare concerns itself

with ameliorative measures for the problems faced by its subjects, i.e., the disadvantaged groups in all societies. It would be pertinent to draw the contours of welfare in order to understand its actual operation in society. Before we undertake this task a formal definition of social problems, the concerns of welfare, is necessary.

It is also necessary to fix the social work attention in the context of the development of weaker sections/disadvantaged groups.

Social problems are conditions which affect a significant number of people, often creating undesirable situations about which people with social concern feel that something can be done through collective action. In this operational definition we have suggested four important ideas:

1. Conditions affecting significant number of people.
2. These conditions are undesirable.
3. People with social concern feel that something can be done.

Social problems arise out of disruption of traditional social systems by social change. The accelerating
process with which social systems undergo changes intensify social problems. Some old scores are settled and new ones crop up. To remove the social-problematic factors and to replace them with social-harmonious interactional processes, we need an enlightened welfare approach. This demand continues the association of the skills of social work with its belief in social justice and peace. Professional social work from the very beginning had the disadvantaged, dispossessed, exploited, weaker sections of the society as its subjects of interest from an acclimative point of view. From the ‘Poor Laws’ stage to unemployment relief, from case oriented clinic approach to a massive combat on social evils, social work has come a long way. As a profession it has shown its development, all phases of which were associated with esoteric small groups of social workers, who felt their relevance much more than the society actually perceived them. Social workers have been useful to people in need. Many times people in need believe in their continuous assistance. Through communication, theological roots, healing touch and commonsense, social workers find their way into people and their problems, particularly at times when people do not know how to come out of these temporary crisis situations. Social work had earned the reputation of an
arrenger of events, manager of resources and problems and as a liaison between the extra money of the rich and their charitable instincts, which they have lost or have remained dormant.

Over the years, many other professionals in society have developed 'helping concerns', (UGC Report, 1980: 14) and social work itself has undergone many changes in its coping orientations and methods. Our concerns are articulately spelt out today: the disadvantaged or the deprived in society. Only our methods need a review and merit serious overhauling.

Roots of social work emerge from the core soil and traditions in society which allow the problem to grow. A disadvantaged community looks forward for acquiring the advantages. The majority groups/haves would not like to lose their advantages in favour of those who never possessed them. Somewhere in between, a socially concerned profession emerges to balance these two extremes and often indulges in a great deal of manipulations and compromises the two as far as possible.

If catering to the needs of the aboriginals in Australia, the Blacks in America, Ibndayaks in Malaysia,
the non-Dutch in Netherlands, the scheduled castes in India was to be an easy task of adjusting the riches and redistributing the wealth, social work would have easily been declared as the champion profession, of the rights of the individuals. Welfare in the last few centuries, especially of deprived sections has been everybody's concern and quite ironically nobody's concern.

Society builds a system to govern its members. Governance of those members in society presupposes looking after their needs and balancing the power between those who have the advantages and those who do not have them. If this is governance, then this is politics and also welfare. But welfare workers in the present context, are not in a position to play up this idea appreciably. If welfare of the people is sacred to then, then it is also sacred to politics. If welfare workers do not wish to believe in the latter then they will have to be satisfied with a relegated position in the society.

Whether or not we have the right to claim that social actions are different from political action in society, we still have to answer the question: for whom are we fighting?

Geoffrey Pearson states:
The social worker has identified for himself a major life problem - how to work out effective means of relating to self and others in mass society - and has provided for himself through his choice of occupation some sort of solution whereby he might more easily experience himself as a human being in his public life as well as private life. Social work as a career becomes for some a limited solution to the problem of mass society. But, unwilling or unable to extend the diagnosis of his ills and their prescribed remedy to his client, and searching in his professional life for the differences between himself and clients rather than the shared features of their lives, the social worker's solutions remain privatised. Indeed, to the extent that his solution remains the privatised pursuit of a privileged minority, it must be an open question as to whether or not we have the right to claim that action as political action.

Pearson Geoffrey, 1977: 184

In the foregoing analysis the discussion has driven home some facts regarding emergence of social work in society with its limited contours of acting on behalf of the state and on behalf of the clients. In definite terms it comes down to situations of actions which are undertaken on behalf of the majority who are powerful, for those in minority and in a state of powerlessness. Social work then is an interaction, interphase between situations yielding power and those yielding powerlessness.

The profession of social work has a body of knowledge, impartable techniques and skills and articulated commitment towards the vulnerable and deprived sections
of the community.

Knowledge required to work with certain categories of clients usually in specific agency settings such as hospitals, probation departments, child guidance clinics and neighbourhood centres called for specialization by field of practice.

The traditionally known fields in the Indian context are:

1. Urban and Rural Community Development including aspects of Tribal Development and Family Planning and even Sectar Sections (Any of them or all of them).


4. Medical and Psychiatric Social Work, and

5. Social Welfare Administration.

In terms of 'method' some of the practitioners are designated as Case Workers, Group Workers and Community Organizers. Case Workers, essentially operate in hospitals, clinics and Agency situations, while Group Workers are equally dispersed in the above settings as well as in Community Work.
We have the other related functions of Social Work termed 'secondary', such as Social Research and administration of Welfare services, very often associated with the same professionals whose major emphasis may be casework loads or community work. Traditionally, status quo institutionalised services have not pronounced its interest in social action as a method of speciality. All the same in Indian settings, social action being used as a method by traditional role performers such as caseworkers and community organisers is not widely known. Only in non-governmental agencies with definite interests spelled out in favour of disadvantaged groups in the community do we find such complementary approaches. It is also in these voluntary agencies that we find, at times, predominant articulation of social action as the only method of bringing services to the clients.

There has always been a difference of opinion as to what suits a developing nation like India, a generic programme of Social Work curriculum or the one which opens up vistas of social work on the basis of fields of practice similar to the development of the professional practice in UK and USA with urban industrial families, the stress and strains of urban ways of life, and the resultant social tensions in the cities and larger towns.
A beginning of Professional Social Work Service was made in the early thirties of this century in India. The First School of the Tata's located itself in a Neighbourhood (settlement) House in Bombay. No efforts to experience the obvious impact of the problem of poverty were needed, as the first institution in social work training was located in an area where crime and poverty could easily be identified.

In the early days, therefore, the thrust of the profession was to enable people to cope with changes wrought by the economic order rather than providing a holistic social change within the very structure of that socio-economic order. This thrust received further impetus during the fifties with the assistance of the Government of the USA. Export teams arrived at patterns similar to American practice of the profession. American Social Work Practice is based on the assumption that a majority of persons have a share in and can benefit from the socio-economic developments taking place within the nation. Hence, the minority, who are left out of the main-stream of national life, need assistance to be integrated into it. On the other hand, India faces the problem of changing a socio-economic structure which benefits a few, and excludes the vast majority.
Primary human needs may not differ from society to society, but the emphasis on the tasks or strategies for meeting such needs will differ in relation to the major problems which are created by the social context in which the tasks must be performed. As mentioned earlier, the main concern in the USA was to help voluntary organisations, as well as the expanding public sector, and to provide social services to residual groups who were outside the mainstream of national life. It was these peripheral groups that had to be re-engaged. As the idea of social development grew in India, there had to be a modification of practice. The major problem was to assist the majority of our population (and not a peripheral group) consisting of the rural poor, the scheduled castes and tribes, to benefit them from the national development. (UGC report, 1980: 14).

A large segment of population viewed from the human rights perspective lay outside this practice, i.e., the rural poor. Even today, except for the effort of the voluntary agencies, which is again not a well-organized network through the length and breadth of the country, there is hardly any service which the professionals of social work are offering.
The problems in the rural context take different shape. First, 'the clients' of social work are assumed to be issues of 'human rights'. Our approach to then is in terms of organizing their rights rather than the needs-approach which is so very common in urban settings. Corch (1969) delves at length into the typical situation in which the concept of social work operates with the concept of human needs - basic human needs - rather than rights.

The concept of needs can often go beyond the rights that are recognized in a given society. Core believes that in this sense social work has a very different stance and approach from that which is suggested by the use of the word 'rights'. Rights give rise to questions of justice, or at least of equity, in particular social arrangements.

Core writes:

"If the basic urge of a worker is for greater justice his stance tends to be more heroic and his action bolder. The social worker's urge is for healing alleviation and soothing and he tends to take on the less heroic but no less useful role of constructive worker." (1969: 57).

These words especially take us to what value positions social work in a given social context wishes to subscribe to and what probably would be the value orientations that the training institutions impart. While discussing the
relationship between human rights and Social Work it would be useful to distinguish between societies on two questions:

Do all societies recognise the obligation to provide their members with the freedom, the opportunities and facilities to achieve maximum development they are capable of? And independent of their value commitments, do the societies have the material resources to provide for these opportunities to their members?

Societies do not recognise all the rights. Some may withhold certain civil rights. The consideration of the stage of economic development of a society becomes particularly relevant in respect of the rights of social security. Gore (1963) distinguishes between these societies some of which, in principle, recognizes social security obligations toward their individual citizens and some of these do not. Each of these can again be subdivided into those which have the means to provide for these opportunities and those which do not have these means. Also we have societies that do not accept the obligations though they have the means and those which neither accept the obligations nor have the means to meet such obligations.

Professional social work can be regarded as a
spontaneous development, a manifestation of awareness of the need to create a means of protecting and helping those individuals who are adversely affected by changes which are reshaping the society. (BABU, 1979: 17).

One expression of the concern in society for its disadvantaged members is the provision of resources without which social work would be largely ineffective. The special function of social work is to project and promote the interests of the clients and to ensure that socio-technological changes serve and do not enslave the clients.

The client community in the present study is the rural so-called caste group with massive illiteracy, low means of survival, large families — at least not corresponding with the income levels of the households, low level of awareness of resources and procedural knowledge, lower aspirational levels and related expectations — levels, low level of organizational capacities, and above all, powerless stigmatized ex-untouchables discriminated forever in the Hindu caste traditional village communities.

The last dimension of their ascribed status weighs as much as the other variables. In the Indian context, people associate a very low level of productivity with the ex-untouchable substratum, which is an attitude very
similar in the case of minorities in some other societies.

Let us review the development orientation of the scheduled caste client groups. The following diagram suggests the possible linkages of various variables deemed necessary for development orientation.

**Linkage Variables for Development Orientation:**

Income → Level → Participation in Formal Organisations (Panchayat/Cooperatives/Political party) → Urban Contact → Disadvantaged Group → Mass Media Exposure → Contact with Development functionaries → Development Orientation

Education

From the above diagrammatic representation the following applications to the Scheduled caste situation are possible.

Participation in formal organisations, urban contact, mass media exposure and contact with the development functionaries can enhance the development orientation of the client community.
Mass media exposure relates to the level of education or standard of literacy that the individual client has. It is a dependent variable. Income level or the means of survival can be an important factor in motivating the client to reach other sources of awareness or may even deter him from moving forward for the fear of exploitation, costs involved, doubts pertaining to the merits of the services etc.

Minimum level of education, i.e., the ability to read and write, and be in a position to discriminate between issues becomes an important factor in creating the necessary development orientation. Participation in formal organizations/political parties and cooperatives will not only enhance the status of the individual but open up channels for further development orientation. Development orientation for the purpose of the study is being treated as the 'basic awareness' discussed at length in the third chapter.

The following diagram presents the possible steps involved in the action profile of the client systems: Individuals, groups and communities.

We begin this diagrammatic exposition with 'development orientation' or the 'basic awareness' level and
develop the hypothetical steps involved in reaching the 'total action' stage. In this study we visualise the 'total action' stage as that final stage in the action profile which will result in the acquisition of service or bring the component issues to a pre-settlement stage.

**Disadvantaged Client Systems: Necessary Actions at Three Levels**

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<th>Individual Level</th>
<th>Group Level</th>
<th>Community Level</th>
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<td>1. Awareness Stage of needs/problem/goals stage</td>
<td>the same as at individual level</td>
<td>the same as at other two levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Education Stage search for resources, willingness to learn procedures</td>
<td>search for resources</td>
<td>search for resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Organisation Stage of money/time/skills</td>
<td>investment of local resources/leadership/system</td>
<td>leadership/cooperation/organisation/org. of support systems.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Self-confidence or power over problem Stage gain confidence due to the problem because of the group interest or power over problem Stage</td>
<td>acquire power because of the number of disadvantaged in the affected area.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Action Stage resultant of the above 4 stages</td>
<td>resultant of the above 4 stages</td>
<td>resultant of the above 4 stages.</td>
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Initially lack of awareness at individual, group or community level can make this step by step method unworkable. Location of services and resources which are out of the reach of individuals/groups/communities may render the stage of education or learning dysfunctional. Individual must be willing to learn/gain procedural knowledge at this stage. Also investment of time/money and skills is a necessary precondition at the next stage — the stage of organisation. Absence of any of the three components mentioned at this stage can make the individual dispirited, and as such he is likely to retreat into powerlessness. The net result: no action beneficial to the client.

We have suggested earlier in this chapter a formal definition of social problem from an operational point of view, as the one in which the following four components are present:

1. Significance of the conditions affecting a large number of people,

2. A feeling that these conditions are undesirable,

3. Welfare concern sees them as the conditions which need to be altered/reshaped/or totally removed.

4. The process of which involves collective action.
Viewed from this angle the problem of the disadvantaged classes especially the rural scheduled caste groups can be located on a continuum from an individual incapacity vested with the client to the structural incapacity or deficiency vested with the structure or society.

This continuum can at best be illustrated as:

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<th>Problems exist because</th>
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<td>of the incapacities/deficiencies of the individuals</td>
<td>of a combination of individual incapacities and structural insufficiencies</td>
<td>because of the structural deficiencies of society</td>
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Similarly the change objectives related to these problem perceptions constitute a continuum ranging from changing individuals to changing the structure of society as follows:

| Changing individuals in order to help them cope better with their situations | Changing individuals through existing resources and services and demanding establishment of new services to cope with the situation of clients | Changing the structure of the society to make it relevant to its members |

Conflicting situations arise when social workers perceive problems and emphasise approaches in ways different from the existing welfare orientation in a society, as
significant characteristics of welfare concerning the poor are derived from the ideas of welfare state wherein the social facilities for development of individuals are offered as matters of political rights rather than as charity.

Developing countries are caught up between the idealistic notions of welfare and their minimal residual welfare orientations. Nevertheless, with the shift in regulatory, remedial and rehabilitative functions of social work to more promotional and developmental ones, it is quite likely that the profession might emerge out with articulated interests into poverty group’s problems and not run the 'despised services for despised minorities'. (see Ahmadullah, 1980: 16).

At this juncture it is important to review the role of training institutions such as the schools of social work in the development of weaker sections. Gore (1975: 140) suggests that the first need of the profession is to define the 'weaker sections', as we are likely to run into difficulties of focusing our attention either too narrowly or too broadly. It is not uncommon for the social work profession to say that social work is for the weaker sections in the society, which amounts to saying
that the issues are being tackled at the level of generality. For instance, the rural population can be weak when compared with the urban population; the middle classes in society when compared with the higher classes; the irregularly employed when compared with regularly employed etc. Gore (1976) feels that "it would be better if we do not adopt the euphemism of the term 'weaker sections' if what we really mean by this term is the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes". Gore stresses that one need not be apologetic for using their casts or tribe nomenclature as it exists in common parlance.

However, keeping in view the terms of reference of the government departments, several review studies undertaken in the past, and also due to the dislike of these disadvantaged people towards the usage of the term 'the scheduled castes', the present study uses the conventional title 'weaker sections'.

The main functions of social work in the context of development of weaker sections is to provide personnel to implement the programmes for these disadvantaged groups. It also can help to devise these programmes. In order to be able to devise these programmes one needs to have a thorough knowledge, at the cognitive level, of what types
of problematic situations these groups face.

The field requirements are at three different levels. At the level of policy-making and planning for the groups, or the macro level, post-graduate training (a dominant emphasis in schools of social work) may be suitable. The second level is at the implementation of these services, involving developmental functionaries and welfare administrators at the district levels. The third level is at the level of the community. When we think of the field level requirements at three levels we may find that our emphasis on post-graduate training in social work is least of the answers. As social work schools have not yet accepted training at the undergraduate level, no appreciable impact can be made at the second and the third level work in the communities. At the level of community, schools of social work have actually failed the government by not accepting the task of training and development of the grassroot functionaries. The state had to undertake on its own the issue of orienting the grassroot functionaries to developmental objectives. Schools of social work -- the places which can imbibe values and inculcate the necessary attitudes among the developmental functionaries have remained far away from the realities. Even at the
level of generality, schools of social work have failed in detailing a picture of the manpower requirement for the tasks of welfare. The task of coordination between social work educators, employing agencies and government departments which could have resulted in a well differentiated and yet interlinked programme of social work education is still a far off goal.

Ever since the study team on social welfare and welfare of backward classes submitted its report to the committee on plan projects in 1958, this problem has been seriously engaging the attention of the government. The study team found that there were literally thousands of functions which could be identified specifically as social welfare and social work functions. Quite naturally, we need varied levels of training, and different institutions to perform these tasks. Philosophy approach and knowledge base could be kept common to all these institutions. The seminar on social work education and development of weaker sections held in the year 1973 reviews the policy, programmes and personnel requirements for the development of weaker sections. It has also had as its objective the necessary social work curriculum for the development of the weaker sections. A few schools in India today are offering this specialization, while others have broadly
modified their course work so as to include some aspects of the development of weaker sections.

Adi Beshoish (1975: 10) points out that the crying need of the weaker sections for development is not planning (except in relation to structural transformation) but intelligent, effective and socially sensitive implementation of various developmental programmes. The social development task calls for social work personnel at different levels namely Micro or grass root level, and at higher levels.

The development functionaries that we have referred to in this study are often untrained and are exposed to only the rudiments of their job through government owned orientation centres. These agents operate at the grass roots. Above them are officers who are devoid of any developmental training accredited by the schools of social work. Not that the schools can deliver the goods thoroughly, but if they would have made attempts and made known to the government that they can also organise these paraprofessional groups the development work in the country would have been a different story. Urban and elitist, city based and city bred professionals with limited practicum to their own credit are actually involved in
the stupendous task of training the professionals for social work tasks, including the ones which are expected to be performed in rural/tribal situations and also those tasks which need serious thought in the field of weaker section or disadvantaged group development.

This study has identified the following personnel of the service systems whose operational area is at the level of the village:

1. Village Development Officer,
2. Bal Sevika (Child Care Worker),
3. Auxiliary Nurse - Mid-wife.

The supervisory manpower, whose operational area is also at the grass roots, identified with the service systems are:


Technical experts whose operational areas are also the villages are:

1. Doctors,
2. Agricultural Officers,
3. Veterinary Doctors,
4. Soil Conservationists, and

Over and above these categories of personnel we have:

Block Development Officers.

Identified in Social Work terminology, these persons function as:

1. Animators.
2. Project and Programme Managers.
3. Supervisors, Co-ordinators.
4. Professionals remotely involving but essentially requiring Social Work components in their work/practice. (Doctors, Extension Officers, Home Economists, Nutritionists as well as grass root workers like the Village Development Officers, Bal Sevikas, and Anganwadi workers.)

Social work training institutions in India are concentrated in cities and as such are engulfed in clinic/agency/slum/settings and are getting used to the idea that the clients will come by themselves, precisely because they have a problem or an issue to solve and that the agency/clinic is the first resource for them to go to for the
resolution exercises in relation to the problems that they face. This does not happen in rural India. Voluntary agencies do not open their doors for the client system to invade them with their problems. In fact, even if the voluntary agency is of a long standing in the community and the community knows its worth and relies on its advice, seldom do we find clients flocking the way they do in the urban charity clinics where succour is offered or welfare maintenance disbursed.

The present study covering five villages attempted at developing role-expectations of social work at three levels namely individuals, groups and communities. As social work with its methods deals with the problems at these levels, we included questions to elicit different expectations at these levels.

The disadvantaged individuals in the study read no letters, and the few who can write also seek the aid of some other person in realising the benefit of the development programmes. However, in all the five villages treated under three units of the study, the third person whom the respondents have contacted or sought assistance from or those whom they requested to accompany them to the service systems, have not always been the same. Sometimes it was
An opinion leader belonging to the upper caste, sometimes it was the grass root development functionary or even the panchayat leaders or the people's representatives. That appears common to them is education and exposure to the intricacies of development network. In short those persons who were acting as guides to the clients knew what they were supposed to be doing. The respondents considered having an educated worker, specially meant for them to assist them in their development, a very helpful proposition. (See Appendix Tables 5 and 6, p. 243)

When asked as to whether they have any preferences of caste to which the worker should belong, 36% of the respondents believe that they would prefer a person of their caste. Questions were asked to know from the respondents as to whether the community in a position to take care of the worker by providing him reasonable means for his living. It is encouraging to note that 36% of the respondents, of all units, feel that they can provide for the educated worker a place to stay and take care of his maintenance, apart from giving him an honorarium. Twenty-six per cent of the respondents felt that government or philanthropists should partly take care of the necessities of this educated worker. Thirty-nine per cent of the respondents felt that they may not be in a position to take
care of the educated worker. They also wish to have this worker's salary etc. to be given by any other source, preferably the government.

Even though the question was eliciting responses about the community's capacity to take necessary care of the worker the respondents appeared to have reacted to this proposition on a personal basis. It is common in those communities that for any community event, every head of the household has to contribute for the common pool. Majority of them in unit one who responded that the community is not capable of funding the educated worker appeared to have reflected on the basis of the meagre means of survival at their disposal. However, even those who had the means also reflected that some other source, preferably the government should fund the educated worker. Either extreme poverty or continued dependency on welfare alone is responsible for such attitudes. (See Appendix Table No. 7, Page 245)

As mentioned earlier, social work has been dealing with individuals, groups and communities with three distinctive methods. Following the current discussion on the integrated approach of social work method (Specht and Vickery, 1978; Finney and Minihan, 1978; Gilbert and
Specht, 1974; Vickery, 1978; Goldstein, 1974; Younghusband, 1973; Briscoe, 1978) we arrive at the commonalities in the three distinctive methods of social work as follows:

1. Helping people enhance, and more effectively utilize their own problem solving and coping capacities.

2. Establishing initial linkages between people and resource systems.

3. Facilitating interaction and modifying and building new relationships and societal resource systems.

4. Facilitating interaction or modifying and building relationships between people within resource systems.

5. Contributing to the development and modification of social policy.

6. Dispensing material resources.

7. Serving as agents of social control.

As we examine the nature of the problem situations which social workers address themselves to and the functions they perform in dealing with such situations, a definition of social work and a frame of reference for its operation begin to emerge.

Our definition of social work practice focuses on the
linkages and interactions between people and resources and the problems to be faced in the functioning of both individuals and systems. The definition is:

Social work is concerned with the interaction between people and their social environment which affects the ability of people to accomplish their life tasks, alleviate distress and realize their aspirations and values. The purpose of social work therefore is to

1. enhance the problem solving and coping capacities of people;
2. link people with systems that provide them with resources, services and opportunities,
3. promote effective and human operations of those systems, and
4. contribute to the development and improvement of social policy.

It is important at this juncture to briefly describe the resource systems available in society.

The focus of social work practice is on the interactions between people and systems in their social environment. People are dependent on social systems for help in obtaining material, emotional or spiritual resources and the services
and opportunities they need to realize their aspirations and to help them cope with their life tasks. By life tasks we mean the responses people make as they face the demands made upon them in various life situations such as growing up in a family, entering school or work, marrying, raising a family, and facing illness and death.

In some societies, the family or the tribe are the major systems that provide people with the resources they need to help them cope with their life tasks. However, in industrialized and bureaucratic societies, people have become dependent on help from extra-family resources such as places of work, schools and units of government; and these systems have become complex and often difficult to negotiate.

People in many countries today can find help from three kinds of resource systems:

1. Informal or natural resource systems consisting of family, friends, neighbours, co-workers, and other helpers;

2. Formal resource systems which may be membership organizations or formal associations such as labour unions, neighbourhood associations, or co-operatives, which promote the interests of their members; and
3. societal resource systems such as schools, hospitals, housing authorities, the police and financial assistance agencies.

Despite the help potentiality available from the network of informal, familial and societal systems, there are situations in which people are unable to obtain the resources, services or opportunities they need to cope with their life tasks and realise their aspirations. Existing systems may be inadequate for many reasons:

1. A needed resource system may not exist or may not provide appropriate help to people who need it.

2. People may not know that a resource system exists or may be hesitant to turn to it for help.

3. The policies of the resource system may create new problems for people.

4. Several resource systems may be working at cross-purposes.

In addition to these inadequacies, any one of the systems may not be functioning properly because of internal problems that hamper its effectiveness. A family, a membership organisation or a societal system may be hampered by internal conflict between its members, inadequate procedures for making decisions and solving problems or faulty internal
communications. Thus the internal functioning of the systems established to help people meet their life tasks and realise their values and aspirations may be the cause of problems for people within the system. It may also keep the systems from aiding people who come to them for help.

The key elements of the model presented by Pincus and Minahan (1978) are the four types of systems in relation to which the social worker carries out his role.

A social worker can be viewed as a change agent, and the public/voluntary or non-profit-making agency that employs him, as a change agent system. We identify this system to emphasise that the worker is influenced in his change efforts by the system of which he is a part and which pays his salary. The social worker will be operating with different sanctions, constraints and opportunities when his own agency, as contrasted with an outside system, becomes a target for change.

The client system is the person, family, group, organisation or community which engages the services of the worker, establishes a working agreement with the worker and is the expected beneficiary of the worker's efforts.
The working agreement or contract may be with the entire client system or some sub-system of it.

As the term is used here the client system is not necessarily the target of the social worker's interventions, although this is the sense in which the term is often used in social work. Sometimes, in order to serve the client system we need to influence another system to change.

The 'target system' refers to those people when the change agent needs to influence in order to accomplish the goals of his change effort.

An important diagnostic task of the social worker, usually in collaboration with the client system, is to establish the goals for change and then determine the specific people, the targets that will have to be changed if the goals are to be reached.

Sometimes the client system and the target system will be the same, as when a change agent accepts an individual client for helping him in solving his own problem. In other cases, the client system may be considered the target system in working towards some goals, but in the case of some other goals, the target and client systems may differ and be apart.
In any one change effort, the social worker will identify several goals over a period of time. Thus different people may be considered targets for different goals at different times.

The term "action system" refers to the social worker and the people he works with and through to accomplish the tasks and achieve the goals of the change effort. An action system can be used to obtain sanctions and working agreement or contract, identify and study a problem, establish goals for change or influence the major targets of change. In any one problem situation the change agent may work with several different action systems to accomplish different tasks and achieve different goals.

Depending on the situation, an action system could be:

1. A new system put together by the worker with the expectation that the members of the system will, in direct interactions with each other, plan activities and programmes relevant to them. For example, a nursing home social worker could form a group of residents to plan activities and programmes or to give advice to the staff on operating the home.

2. An existing system already in operation, examples are a family with behavioural problems, or a teenager
alcoholism gang operating in the area of the neighborhood centre or community centre.

3. Several people who may not at any one time be engaged in direct interaction with one another but when the worker will co-ordinate and work with to change a target on behalf of a client. For example, a temple construction for a village involving interactions of the upper castes, government administration, the lower castes and those who wish to give their labour or money.

Thus change agents may work with a number of different types of action systems at different steps in their change efforts.

Conventionally, social work in India has been organizing its functions at individual, group and community levels. Community workers also work with groups and individuals. However, within the community worker's approach the case work typicalities, such as history sheets, counselling sessions and endless reflections into the "insights" and "acts" as part of the treatment process, are not associated with his working strategy. Briefly, a case worker approach to individuals in problem situations involves:
A. Insight into individuality and personal characteristics.
B. Insight into the resources, dangers and influences of
   the social environment.
C. Direct action of mind upon mind.
D. Indirect action through the social environment. (Brown, 1977: 82)

However, a community worker, when involved with
individuals in problem solving situations generally, performs
such tasks as are supplementary and complementary to his
basic avocation namely community work.

The present study developed five such roles of the
community worker involved at the level of individual problems.

These are given below:

1. To create necessary awareness (of needs/problems/
   resources).
2. To organise referral services.
3. To inculcate the spirit of self-esteem.
4. To develop individual leadership.
5. To show the means by which the clients can solve their
   problems. (see appendix table Nos. 3 and 11, Pages 246 and 249)

This study incorporated ranking of these role-expecta-
tions on the first preference basis. This disadvantaged
group of scheduled castes has boldly asked for inculcating the spirit of self-esteem in them; creation of "awareness" by community workers at various points, emerges as the second majority expectation.

At group level, the study developed the following four role-expectations:

1. To create oneness (unity) in the group.
2. To motivate the clients for co-operative economic development.
3. To make them realise the importance of education.
4. To make them understand the common features of their problems.

(See appendix tables Nos. 9 and 12, pages 21 and 25)

The study reveals a majority of the respondents giving importance to the role-expectation which enables them to understand the common features of their problems. One quarter of the respondents believed that with unity they could solve a variety of problems. And as such the community worker should concentrate on bringing numbers of the disadvantaged communities together. One quarter of the respondents rank the role-expectations of making them realise the importance of education as one of the tasks that can be performed at group level.
This study developed the following four expectations at the community level:

1. To bring educational resources for their children.
2. To create a cohesive community.
3. To work for amenities such as electrification, drinking water etc.
4. To develop leadership (See appendix tables NOS. 10 and 13, pages 248 & 251)

One third of the respondents have indicated their first preference to amenities creation as one of the tasks of the community worker.

To create a cohesive unified community emerges as the next majority preference.

When an external change agent enters a community, he is usually considered as an "expert" or superior. Superior-inferior or donor-recipient relationship between the external helper and the local community influences the change process. This situation may lead to unwarranted or unnatural changes in the local culture in the name of development, as it does not make the community discover itself and build up its own capability and strength for change. It is, therefore, that the community's self-sustained growth is not attained.

(Mia Ahondulla, 1980: 19)
Within this frame of reference Paulo Freire, based on his experiences in agricultural extension, insists that 'methodological failings (of extension or development work) can always be traced to ideological errors'. Freire sees "an implicit ideology of paternalism, social control and non-reciprocity between experts and the helpless'. Thus, what is most important in this particular line of thought is the awakening of the community, which Freire has described as raising 'critical consciousness' of the community as a method of 'liberating the poor'. In community work the expert or the professional or the external agent enters into a reciprocal relationship and dialogue with the community and both educate and liberate themselves in the process. With Freire many would agree perhaps, that any policy, programme or project which aims to change people but does not become truly theirs, is anything but development. For him, the crucial element of the approach to true developmental change is true communication without violating the dialectic of reciprocity, between the change agents or technical experts and the people. (Freire, 1973: xi)

It is often assumed that a practitioner who works with the poor represents his agency's perspective of the poor. This reflects a priori analysis of poverty, an image of the poor, a philosophical judgement or empirical
picture and a value commitment, which guide the course of action he takes. The agency perspective of the poor when they are helping or the practitioner’s own will determine his role or nature of involvement in the activities designed to change their situation. What changes are sought, how the changes are to be brought about and to what extent the poor themselves will be involved in activities to bring about these changes, are questions which are resolved largely within the framework of identity that of the practitioners as well as that of the poor themselves and how they will relate as human groups. The level of awareness they can attain, and the degree of critical consciousness that can be raised depends to a great extent on the practitioner’s perception of himself and the poor, as well as how those, he is helping perceive themselves.

1. In this chapter, an operational definition of social problems was attempted. The problems of the disadvantaged groups, particularly, the scheduled castes were received from the point of view of "operational definition".

2. The profession of social work and its contours were outlined in the context of human rights.

3. The key factors of 'awareness' or the ‘developmental
orientation and the linkage variables for this orientation were also discussed.

4. Need-oriented actions of the disadvantaged client systems at the levels of individuals, groups and communities were specifically discussed. Various stages through which these actions take place were suggested to be in a chain like awareness — education — organisation — self-confidence or power over the problems — total actions.

5. The problem of rural scheduled caste group was theoretically explained through a continuum of individual incapacity of the clients to the structural incapacity or deficiency of the society. Similarly, the change objectives of these problems-perceptions were located on the continuum ranging from changing individuals to changing society.

6. The requirements at field level and paucity of the response from the schools of social work in the Indian context have also been mentioned.

7. The proposition that para-professionals should meet the developmental needs of the community was put forward and was well received by the client communities.
8. Professional social work and its method as interactions between people and systems in their social environment was emphasised.

The next chapter deals with inferences of the study based on primary sources and also makes permissible conclusions on the basis of the review of the past work done in the field of weaker sections.