Chapter-VI

Social Work Intervention
Modern age is called an age of cooperation, collaboration, correlation and coordination. Nothing can exist in this world in isolation. Every branch of knowledge is correlated, interdependent and has derivation of development and growth. This is true in case of social work and social sciences because social work deals with the problems of human beings and problems cannot be understood without the knowledge of psychology, sociology, political, ethnicity of human beings and the society at large. It is becoming increasingly perceptible to the social workers that the problems of personality and human adjustment require the integration of our knowledge of biological organism, society and culture. No social worker can ignore the significance of sociological, psychological, anthropological, economic data in the study and the solution of their problems. Social work practices are sometimes suspect, sometimes viewed with ambivalence by the public; they need to be continually validated and proven. Social work aims to improve and facilitate the working of society, the environment of relationship and social institutions developed from relationships, in which human beings live. Henceforth social work tries to improve social life increasing cooperation among human beings and increasing solidarity in society. The most used formulation currently is the international definition of social work devised jointly by the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and supported by the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW): “The social work profession promotes social change, problem-solving in human relationship and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilizing theories of human behavior and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work”. (IFSW, 2000). The above definition has three key elements of social work i) social change; ii) problem solving in human relationship; and iii) liberation of people to enhance wellbeing.

To deal with the problem of the individual, group and community at large social worker must have the meticulous knowledge of the foundation of social work practice. The social work practice helps the social workers to identify deep rooted problem lying with the individual as well as environment. A little effort has been thrust to know the occurrence of the exact problem of the person and environment through the following diagram which helps the social worker to do the needful to solve the problem.
A Holistic Conceptualization of the Foundation for Social Work Practice

SOcial Work

Person

In

Environment

Purpose

To enhance the social functioning of individuals, families, groups,
and communities in their environment.

Sanction

Clients, Private/Public Agencies, The Profession, Government (Laws)

Values

Dignity and worth of every person

Practice Principles code of ethics

Democratic, caring society

Knowledge

Developmental/life cycle Socialization Organizational theory

Biological Role Political Science

Psychosexual Behavioral theory Legislative process

Psychosocial Communication Social Policy

Cognitive Stress/Conflict Cultural anthropology

Moral Systems Community resources

Spiritual Group process Public/Private service

Self Actualization Population at risk Social welfare

Self awareness
The diagram of A Holistic Conceptualization of the Foundation of Social Work Practice has been constituted with five important elements i.e. Purpose, Sanction, Values, Knowledge and Skills. Let’s have a synoptic view on each of the elements.

**Purpose:** The primary purpose of social work continues to the enhancement of social functioning. Social worker enables individuals, groups, families and communities to function more effectively within their various environments. Social workers strive to eliminate discrimination and to create just social environments. The ways in which social workers implement their purpose take different forms, approaches, and methodologies. Workers engage in direct practice with client in such roles as counselor, enabler, broker, case manager, and advocate. They may also assume various indirect practice roles, such as supervisors, managers, administrators, teachers, researcher, and consultants. They work to prevent, resolve, or minimize human problems.

**Sanction:** The authority and permissions that sanction the practice of social workers in society come from several different sources. These include i) governmental agency boards with legal regulation responsibility; ii) public or private human service agencies; and iii) the organized profession.

**Values:** The values of the social work profession are rooted in a belief in the dignity and worth of every human being, and recognition of the need for a democratic and caring society.
**Knowledge:** To carry their commitment into action, social workers need to understand persons and environment and their interdependence. Professional social work is selected for an understanding of behaviors, needs and goals of human systems within the context of their diverse cultures and environment. More specifically, the workers need to know about the various systems that constitute their work environment. To gain knowledge about the profession and social welfare policies and services, social worker study theories relevant to practice.

**Skills:** Guided by values and knowledge, a social worker executes a series of activities within the framework of a method with client related systems to achieve identified goals. These activities constitute the skills of the worker. Social workers are known for using interpersonal relationships in a helping process. In addition, problem solving, goal setting, and task defining are commonly identified as central to practice.

The SHGs are formulated to achieve empowerment and it is not possible without microfinance. But in reality very few SHGs are completing their life cycle to achieve empowerment. Perhaps women do not have adequate knowledge about the SHGs or micro credit is not easily available which let down the SHGs at premature stage. Until and unless the SHGs and microfinance becoming complementary to each other the women empowerment will remain secluded. Henceforth it is the duty of the researcher or social work practitioner to use social work practice which is shown in the diagram to identify the problem related to the SHGs, and microfinance so that something must be done to achieve empowerment.

Undoubtedly we require thorough knowledge about the social group work to understand the SHGs satisfactorily. Self Help Group is a group concept which requires social group work method to deal with the problems of the SHGs. Therefore we are bound to know the tools & techniques and skills of social group work to handle the SHGs. Let’s have a look to the methods of social group work. “Social group work is a method of social work which helps individuals to enhance their social functioning through purposeful group experiences and to cope more effectively with their personal, group or community problems” (Konopka, 1963). Social group work has the knowledge of individuals, group, community behavior and skill of working with the group members. Leader is made aware about the factors of human behavior, such as role of heredity, environment, learning, socialization, motivation and perception. Leader of the group must have skill in participation with the group, dealing with group feeling, using agency and
community resources for achieving the target of the SHGs. The leader enables the groups to function in such a way that both group interaction and programme activities contribute to the growth of the individual, and the achievement of desirable goal. The objectives of SHG is i) to help the individuals use groups to further their development into emotionally balanced, intellectually free and physically fit person; ii) to help the groups to achieve the ends in the economic, political and social democracy; iii) to bring highest possible development of human personality dedicated and devoted to the democratic ideals; iv) to bring changes in internal personality, encourages to accept new roles, bring closeness in the relations among group members, improves the condition of systems and also in communication process.

In this particular study, the researcher put his best effort for congregation, substantial and relevant information from primary as well as secondary sources. After gathering information for the respondents using interview schedule for data collection, the researcher identified a good number of problems in self help group. It was also divulged through investigation that the concept of professional social work is not very popular in this region i.e. West Bengal. Social work is a very broad as well as a century old subject. It includes many approaches such as preventive, promotive and curative approach of social work. It is such an inter disciplinary practice profession which conglomerate of developmental psychology, sociology, social economics, social medicines, social policy and planning, social welfare administration and so on so forth. A lot of research and development in this particular issue has been made over a long period of time, which has helped in establishing it as a profession. Gradually it has also been established that social work promotes the general welfare of the society, from local to global levels and the development of people, their communities, and their environments. Social work should advocate better living conditions conducive to the fulfillment of basic human needs and should promote social, economical, political and cultural values and institutions that are compatible with the realization of social justice. Considering the above mentioned points, self help group, microfinance and women empowerment would be an ideal field of practice for social work professionals because of the existence of abundant social problem.

Considering the discussion with the respondents and the available literature, the researcher found the following as the fundamental problems of the Self Help Group, Microfinance and Women Empowerment.
1. Low level of education among the group members

2. Lack of awareness among the group members about the schemes related to rural development.

3. Problem of alcoholism and gambling etc. among the husbands of the group members.

4. Unhygienic working condition and family environment of the group members.

5. Non availability of alternative employment opportunities for the group members.

6. Active role played by the moneylenders for indebtedness among the community members.

7. Identification of proper income generation activities and its market for supplying the product.

8. Lack of skills about the enterprise.

9. Absenteeism in group meeting and dreadful effect of bank loan default etc.

10. Political maneuvering between the group members and political leader.

11. Nepotism between the leader and group member regarding loan disbursement.

12. Seclusion of the poorest among the poor group member in the community.

13. Lack of awareness among the group members about human trafficking.


15. Lack of awareness among the group members about the women friendly laws and enactment.

16. Lack of awareness among the group members about the evil effect of dowry, child marriage, child labour, female feticide, female infanticide etc.

17. Lack of awareness about the evil effect of environmental degradation.

18. Lack of awareness regarding their constitutional rights (Human rights) and duties.
Apart from the above, group members also experience other kinds of problem related to physical, psychological and emotional in their life. Self Help Group is such a platform where the professional social worker might play a multidimensional role. Social welfare, social services, social justice, dignity and the worth of the person, the importance of human relationships, integrity and competence are some of the issues that social worker deals with.

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) makes it clear that the social workers who are involved in developmental work through Self Help Group, Microfinance and Women Empowerment should be guided by the professional values and ethics of social work. Social workers should carefully examine relevant issues and their possible impact on the individuals before deciding on a course of action. Along with these social workers should facilitate informed participation by the inmates of the Self Help Group in shaping social policies and social instructions through active participation, consultation and training and development.

Apart from the above the researcher also found the following elementary functions that the social worker might play in the Self Help Group for its empowerment and sustainable growth.

1. Conducting awareness programmes on different issues like dowry, child marriage, alcoholism, HIV/AIDS, legal aid etc.

2. Arranging primary and vocational and continuing education for the SHG members.

3. Conducting health education programme through awareness on preventive and social medicine.

4. Developing Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials for better publication and promotion of SHG.

Social workers provide interventions to individuals, families and groups in order to assist them with their needs and issues. Interventions are intended to aid clients in alleviating problems impeding their well-being. The interventions used by social workers are those that are identified as potentially helpful on the basis of the social worker's ongoing assessment of the client.

Social work interventions are selected on the basis of the issues, needs and strengths of the individual member of the Self Help Group. These are determined as a result of a psychosocial
assessment conducted by the social worker. In initial meetings with the group members, the social worker will obtain extensive information from the group members in order to develop a detailed and comprehensive understanding of the Self Help Groups. The assessment will be used to develop a treatment plan with the members of the Self Help Groups, in which interventions, action, steps and desired outcomes are specified. A time-frame will be established for each outcome, with a means to measure the group members’ progress towards achieving his/her goals on a regular basis identified. Henceforth the diagram of A Holistic Conceptualization of the Foundation of Social Work Practice would help the social worker to draw cordial plan to sought result oriented solution with shortest period of time.

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) has identified a number of super specialty areas in social groups where social workers might work. It influences the types of interventions selected for use with the individuals. Areas of practice include aging in the group members, alcohol & substantive abuse of the group members, adjustment problem of the group members, socio-cultural and economic problem of the group members, absenteeism, borrowing from the moneylender, loan defaulter, superstitions etc. Interventions can include: psychotherapy (individual, couples, families, and group), group therapy, role playing, system theory, counseling, case management, crisis intervention, relaxation training, anger management, stress management etc.

Social worker works with the different stages of development of the Self Help Group besides helping them to use micro-credit from microfinance institutions. The social worker helps the under privileged sections to organize themselves for formulating Self Help Groups and if requires the members of the group will be provided or developed the literature of regional language related to the SHGs. Social worker must be knowing the strengths and weaknesses of the individual group member and help the members to use group dynamics to achieve the group goals. The social worker must provide the group member latest information regarding the programme and policies so that they make use of all these things. The social worker must show trust on the group members so that they might feel empowered. S/he must enable the group members in number of areas i.e. bank linkage, inter loaning, selecting right venture, marketing, abolishing money lenders, participation in community development activities, removing social stigma & evil practices etc. These program and service areas vary on the type of problems that
clients bring to a particular setting, representing specializations in social work. Thus, the function of social work interventions is determined by the types of issues and needs which clients bring to the social work setting as well as the social worker's specialization area.

The degree to which social work interventions are effective is determined by the degree to which client goals and outcomes are achieved. When goals and outcomes are achieved as demonstrated by the results of the work done between the social worker and client, the interventions used are then recognized as effective.

When providing services and interventions, social workers have been criticized in a number of areas and are not always viewed in a positive light. Social workers are often thought to be untrained, uncaring and disruptive in the lives of clients. In a recent report of Peter Beresford (2010) on client feedback, it was found that clients frequently complain that little social support is provided by social workers and prevention services are rarely available. Clients continue to feel stigmatized and looked down upon after working with a social worker. There remains a need for continued efforts to improve and strengthen the role of social workers as they intervene in the lives of those with whom they work.

However the importance of professional social work is undoubtedly growing day by day because of its scientific and systematic in nature. Philanthropic and humanitarian are the important factors of social work which played crucial role in helping the individuals to overcome their problems by their own. It is such profession which condemns the act of the individual not the actor and thus makes the profession noble one. Creating self worth is the important aspect of this profession. It is the only profession which rehabilitates the sufferer and reinforces some of the skills and techniques for their perpetuation.