Social Work with Community Organization: A Method of Community Development

Mohd. Shakil
Research Scholar, Department of Social Work, A.M.U., Aligarh.
Available at: shakilmswamu@gmail.com

Abstract:
Human societies are not perfect. Social problems emerge and human needs arise that require for societal solutions. All citizens of a country should enjoy the full benefits of the state. In fact, community development is a process through which the efforts of people are united with governmental authorities for improving the economic, social and political conditions of communities as well as integrating these communities into the life of the nation and to enable them to contribute their best to nation’s progress and development. In order to intervene human problems and meet their needs with resources, there is a social work profession which associates with community development through community organization. Social work is a profession based on scientific knowledge and skills. It adopts significantly two methods of practice named primary method and secondary method that are mean to intervene the human problems and providing solutions. Community organization is a part of primary method of professional social work which adheres by its methodology to work with communities. Thus, in the discourse of social work profession, this paper attempts to provide a linear understanding about professional practice of social work with community organization. The paper is divided into seven parts. The first part deals with the introduction. The second part discusses community organization and community development. The third part describes the historical context of social community work. The fourth part focuses upon the principles in community organization. The fifth part presents the skills in community organization. The sixth part deals with the components of community organization. Finally, the last part presents the roles of social worker in community organization along with conclusion.

Key Words: Social Work, Community, Organization, Development, Principles and Skills.

Introduction:
At the turn of the twenty first century, human beings, including individual civil and political liberties, as well as meeting the physical and material needs of human society, are accepted concerns for development both as outcomes and conditions for sustained progress. The problems and issues of egalitarian development, democracy, participation, ethics and human rights spread over development theory, the pronouncements of major development institutions, such as the
United Nations and the World Bank, and the activities of new social movements alike (Elliot, 2008). The profession of social work spans more than 100 years. Over this period, the profession has changed in scope and depth. Despite the varied functions and methods of profession, it has always been committed to social justice and the promotion of well-being for all. The profession has made great strides and is experiencing a resurgence of energy, commitment, and advancement as people face new global realities and challenges; and embrace new and innovative technologies (Glisson & et. al., 2012). Social workers need to understand social work practice in and beyond the political arena. Community practice is the component of professional social work that helps individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities that address social forces shaping their behaviors and expanding or limiting their opportunities. The inclusion of the social world and a commitment to community in the dream of really helping means being available to any group in the community, hearing what all citizens want, and providing for those most in need. It means choosing locations, hours, and staff that will make service users experience us as being there and available to them. It means providing the political support needed for programs to start, survive, thrive, and protect the vulnerable and socially marginalized. It means a devotion to social justice (Hardcastle, 2011).

Community Organization and Community Development:

Community organization is one of the primary methods of social work profession. It deals with intervention in the communities to solve the community problems. Basically, community organization and community development are inter-related as two sides of the same coin. Community organization consists of two words which are community and its organization. Community is defined in terms of geographical boundaries. The area must have some common characteristics as the word community denotes a number of people sharing and having certain interests, sentiments, behaviors and objects in common by virtue of belonging to a social group. The community from the point of view of social work is any area where people have common interests in the social welfare field and where the community organization process is being attempted. It may be a small community, a section of a city, an entire city, a metropolitan area, a country, a state, or a nation. While organization is a process through which it is made possible for people of a community to work out problems involved in coordinating the social services that are provided by all types of agencies such as economic development, health, welfare and others. The general objective of community organization is to bring about and maintain a progressively more effective adjustment between social welfare resources and social welfare needs. The scope of community organization is broad and its content is varied. It is needed in all types of communities in hamlets, villages, towns, cities and metropolitan areas (Misrfa, 1994). Community organization creates changes in
larger groups and organizational units. The attempts of community organization, by their very nature, create change in situations or in the environment which in turn affects personal well-being. Community problem-solving initiatives require the involvement of community leaders, including governmental units; ethnic and religious organizations; and professional, consumer, and civic groups. Those people who participate in community change vary from community to community, depending on the particular problem that the community action addresses (DuBois, & Miley, 1999).

The social work with community organization requires that all professional social workers should have the sufficient knowledge and skills in order to conceptualize and practice in a holistic and integrated way; to be able to take an account of all system which affects the individual as well as community, to identify unmet material needs, poor service delivery, and inadequate resources to promote the application of the rich variety of techniques available to social work on a community work and intra-and-inter-organizational basis, and to contribute to the improvement and further development of social policy. It is only by this effort that community development can hope effectively to ameliorate the profound level of disadvantage experienced by the community organization. There are several ways in which experts and professionals work in community and the community development is one of the major ways of working for community people in the community (Bhattacharya, 2012).

Professional social workers need to understand clearly the concept of community development as well. The term ‘community’ is a general, complex, contested and comprehensive one as different people and professionals use it in different ways and perspectives for different purposes. Although, Stepney and Popple in 2008 have discussed the concept of community in terms of five characteristics which are size of the population, commonality among people, identity and belonging, primary relationships and attachments, and finally the local culture. But in contemporary modern and postmodern life do we have communities with these characteristics or do we live in such communities? The progressive 21st century with the baggage of successful colonization and subjugation of local populations, prominent achievement of industrialization, modernization, production and prosperity, urbanization, controlled geographical location of communities based on some criteria, such as caste or occupation, particularly in rural areas and villages, and such communities’ integration and politicization have rendered the constitution of community complex, challenging and diffused. As the life styles of people have changed over recent times, so have their communities and their conception of the community. While, community development is defined as a participatory people-centered process that involves bringing together, mobilizing and organizing people, keeping them together and enabling them to work together to address their needs and issues and thus to facilitate their own,
their communities’ and society’s comprehensive development as par the social development approach (Pawar, 2014).

Hence, community organization is a process through which attempts are made to make adjustment between community’s felt needs and community resources. It directs its resources for the promotion of community integration and collaboration among the people. While, in community development, it is the government having interest in the economic development of community which organizes a network of extension and other services necessary for the fulfillment of felt needs for improving the conditions of people living in it by encouraging people’s participation in organization of such services. In community organization, in addition to improvement in conditions, mainly economic, sought to be achieved in planned manner, it is the development of cooperative and collaborative attitudes and practices which are primarily stressed by the community organizer who is not but a professional social worker (Misra, 1994). Additionally, it is not easy to make people change readily and rapidly. New ways of doing and thinking always create psychological insecurities and sometimes create ethical and spiritual insecurities. Change automatically creates uncertainty about what is really happening and what can be expected. Furthermore, old practices practiced for generations are likely to be considered sacred. Thus, there is resistance to change from the people generally and more particularly from the conservative leaders of the community who are the custodians of the traditional way of life. Therefore, promotion of development and change requires very careful handling and needs highly skilled workers who have both the knowledge of how change and development take place and the skills to work with the people to induce them to change (Mukherji, 1961).

The Historical Context of Social Community Work:
The first attempts to coordinate community activities and actions stemmed from the London Charity Organization Society, begun in 1869, that tried to remove duplication and fraud in relief administration. Its purpose was to improve total services in the community through better cooperation and coordination. The first organized attempt to coordinate and systematize social services in the United States was made in 1877 with the establishment of the Buffalo Charity Organization Society. The need was at large since many private agencies had been established and that brought about much duplication, with many gaps in total services as well as unnecessary competition. In 1909, in Pittsburgh and Milwaukee, the first community welfare councils in the United States were made in 1877 with the establishment of the Buffalo Charity Organization Society. The need was at large since many private agencies had been established and that brought about much duplication, with many gaps in total services as well as unnecessary competition. In 1909, in Pittsburgh and Milwaukee, the first community welfare councils in the United States were established. They were called Council of Social Agencies. They have since spread and been extended so that most of the larger population centers now have community welfare councils. These councils organization-wise, generally focus on three main areas: health, welfare, and recreation. In 1909, the first section meeting of a national conference, The National Conference of Charities and Corrections,
was held on the theme ‘Neighborhoods and Civic Improvement’. This appears to be the starting of specific interest in community organization in social work. The 1962 Curriculum Statement of the Council on Social Work Education reaffirmed the importance of community organization in both training and practice by specifying it as one of the basic methods of social work (Skidmore, 1991).

The community work formally started in India in 1937. The experiences of working with slums in the city of Mumbai lead to the establishment of the first institution of social work education. It was supposed to provide trained manpower in the social welfare sector. Community work in India as a method of social work is greatly seen as a process of developing local initiatives, particularly in the areas of education, health and agriculture development, by matching community needs with available resources. The largely emphasis is on to motivate people to express their needs and to avail themselves of existing resources. During the first phase, from 1937 to 1952, community work in India was fairly dormant. The opportunities came with the launching of the community development programme in India in 1952. The first five year plan of India stated that the pace of economic development depends on a variety of factors which constitute the psychological and sociological setting within which the community operates. It is obvious that no plan can be succeeded unless it invests in the improvement of the human material. It is in this context that the community development programme was conceived as a grand ideology to mobilize local efforts for local development. It still continues to be the major philosophy underlying the practice of community work (Siddiqui, 1997).

Principles in Community Organization:

It is very significant for a professional social worker to understand some of the underlying principles in community organization before looking at the specific processes involved. McNeil, in a pioneering effort, observes that there are certain principles that seem universally applicable:

- Community organization for social welfare is concerned with people and their needs. Its objective is to enrich human life by bringing about and maintaining a progressively more effective adjustment between social welfare resources and social welfare needs.
- The community is the primary client in community organization for social welfare. The community may be a neighborhood, city, country, state or nation.
- It is an axiom in community organization that the community is to be understood and accepted as it is and where it is.
- All the people of the community are concerned in its health and welfare services. Representation of all interests and elements in the population and their full and meaningful participation are essential objectives in community organization.
• The fact of ever changing human needs and the reality of relationships between and among people and groups are the dynamics in the community organization process.

• Interdependence of all threads in the social welfare fabric of organization is a fundamental truth. No single agency can usefully live unto itself alone but is constantly performing its functions in relation to others.

• Community organization for social welfare as a process is a part of generic social work (Skidmore, 1991).

Skills in Community Organization:
Social worker to work with communities is required to be trained and have the following skills which are very essential in community organization:

• Skill of maintaining relationship with community members which is named as rapport building.

• Skill in use of professional judgment in training and bringing into contact of this relationship, after the worker has been able to resolve or modify the issues between them by an individual approach.

• Skill in knowing where to take hold and when to let go of a project.

• Skill in helping people to grow in personal and social understanding, in enabling people to clarify their ideas, and in motivating them to express their own goal.

• Skill in enabling people to find the ways to fulfill their goals, in communicating knowledge of programmes and resources available to them, and in stimulating people’s movement towards achieving their goals (Misra, 1994).

Components of Community Work:
There are five significant components of community work in community organization:

A. The Community: The term in social work terminology is used to denote a targeted population within a defined geographical locale. However, the nature of the community varies with the perplexing variety of settings for social life in villages, towns, cities and metropolitan regions in modern societies.

B. The Groups: In India, it is common to see groups living in a particular locality on the basis of caste, occupation, religion and place of migration which may also mean linguistic affiliations. These particular divisions structure relationships in the community. The hold of tradition on different groups is another vital point of analysis for the professional social worker.

C. The Individual: One of the basic values of social work practice is a belief in the inherent worth and dignity of human beings. Therefore, no matter whether the ultimate purpose is to introduce welfare services for the entire community or to work with a group, the worker is always conscious of the importance of each member of the community.
The participation of each member in the benefits of development is a prominent objective in any type of social work intervention.

D. The Social Worker: The social worker is an important component of community organization. He is required to possess scientific temper and skills to work with communities. He has to learn several things such as language, new customs, unfamiliar behavior patterns, and so on.

E. The Agency: The nature of the agency, the people who make policy decisions, the way in which these decisions are made, the sources of funding and the political affiliation of the organization, all have a significant bearing on community work in India and other third-world countries. Community work through an agency means that the method of determining needs and priorities, the beneficiary and the range of activities, will be substantially influenced by the agency manifesto. In governmental agencies, the worker has very little freedom to deviate from the norms set by the agency. In NGOs, there may be some scope for discussion, particularly in effecting some modification of the need, area or the strategy for meeting it (Siddiqui, 1997).

Roles of Social Worker in Community Organization:
Social worker in community organization is supposed to have good technical skills and be able to get along well with community people. Importantly, there are four key roles in community organization:

- **Community Organizer as Teacher:** Social worker is consistent with the ideal of community development. One way of doing so is through the creation and encouragement of local leadership. Building capacity is all about teaching people that they can be leaders.

- **Community Organizer as Catalyst:** A community organizer is also a catalyst and a person who stimulates actions in others. Social worker starts community organization by finding common problems which community members realize to be important, bringing together people who may not know each other, or working to create a sense of community that can become the basis for organizing. Organizer tries to target initial actions on that they bring about victories to keep people interested and active. Organizers are able gradually to enlarge people’s vision of what if possible and thereby get them active on a range of issue and problems.

- **Organizer as Facilitator:** Social worker also plays a key role as being a facilitator. Very often, community actions fail as members lack the experience or patience to keep an organization going. Probably, more organizations fail from lack of follow-through than from lack of original enthusiasm. Social worker
as being community organizer facilitates keeping an organization going and ensures the follow-through.

- **A Linking Role:** The fourth role often played by social worker is to bring the gap between the organization, its members, and the community. There are several ways in which linking is accomplished. Sometimes, linking involves a broad search for enquiry: what is the political impact? How much support will the group receive for its cause? At other times, linking is limited to a very specific task. For example, one person in a girl’s rape counseling centre may work as a liaison with police to discuss testimony, protection, or training police to deal with victims. In other words, a social worker in community organization is supposed to have ability to relate to people, to analyze problems, to locate resources, to see potential for change, and to be able to create effective structures for problem solving. These abilities combined with skills in the roles of teacher, catalyst, facilitator, and a creator of linkages are essential for community organization in the professional social worker to work with communities.

**Conclusion:**
Social work is a form of professional service comprising a composite of scientific knowledge and skills. There are six methods of social work profession which come under two broad methods named primary method and secondary method. In primary method, the first three methods are: (i) Social Case Work, (ii) Social Group Work, and (ii) Social Work with Community Organization; while in secondary method, the next three methods are: (i) Social Welfare Administration, (ii) Social Action, and (iii) Social Research Work. In the present paper, it is an attempt to present a linear understanding about the practicing process of community organization by community organizer who is none but a professional social worker who associates him/herself with established agency to intervene the problems and needs of community members and plays a prominent role for community development.

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About the author:

Mr. Mohd. Shakil is pursuing Ph.D. in the Department of Social Work, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh since November, 2012. He is also availing Senior Research Fellowship under the scheme of UGC (SRF-UGC). His research topic is “Children of Incarcerated Mothers: Study of District Jails of Aligarh and Etah, Uttar Pradesh”.

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