

A Case Study on Competency of Professional Social Work Students in Social Work Education, Research and Training

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Abstract

Before a decade it was very difficult to get an employment when a student who completed his/her PG in Social Work. But at present there are number of opportunities in the field of Social Work. At present there are a plenty of employer like National Health Mission, Kerala Social Security Mission, Social Justice Department, CSR Departments, School Counseling, Multi-National Companies, Medical and Psychiatric Social Work Departments are ready to give job for Social Work Professionals. From the beginning the employment for minimum for one year. Later it shrinks to 3 months and 6 months. Now and then there were a few employer provides job for minimum one year. The employer decided to take such a decision because of the level of performance appraisal. Here the employer undergoing an assessment in various aspects depending up on the nature of job. The criteria includes Administration Skills, Skills in Documentation, Task Completion, Publication, communication, decision making, understand the individual difference, problem solving and case management etc. The final result is not fair but has to be disclosed. The major reasons are No Effective Aptitude Test, Students are opting their specialization not based on their personal capacity or personal wish it is based on the interest of facilitator and the demand of market / job opportunities the students are only concentrating to complete their course, The facilitators are guest faculties and not much firm in some of the aspects such as submission of research and Field Work Report, failure in Selection of Training and Placement Agency, No trainers in the Placement Agency, sympathetic approach towards the students etc. To protect the dignity of social work profession, this is the right time to develop the skills of the students. Every institution has to awake and to provide training centered education to the professional social work students.

Keywords: Competency, employer, appraisal, Administration, Placement

1. Introduction

Before a decade it was very difficult to get an employment when a student who completed his/her PG in Social Work. But at present there are number of opportunities in the field of Social Work. At present there are a plenty of employer like National Health Mission, Kerala Social Security Mission, Social Justice Department, CSR Departments, School Counseling, Multi-National Companies, Medical and Psychiatric Social Work Departments are ready to give job for Social Work Professionals. From the beginning the employment for minimum for one year. Later it shrinks to 3 months and 6 months. Now and then there were a few employer provides job for minimum one year. The employer decided to take such a decision because of the level of performance appraisal. Here the employer undergoing an assessment in various aspects depending up on the nature of job. The criteria includes Administration Skills, Skills in Documentation, Task Completion, Publication, communication, decision making, understand the individual difference, problem solving and case management etc. The final result is not fair but has to be disclosed. The major reasons are No Effective Aptitude Test, Students are opting their specialization not based on their personal capacity or personal wish it is based on the interest of facilitator and the demand of market / job opportunities the students are only concentrating to complete their course, The facilitators are guest faculties and not much firm in some of the aspects such as submission of research and Field Work Report, failure in Selection of Training and Placement Agency, No trainers in the Placement Agency, sympathetic approach towards the students etc. To protect the dignity of social work profession, this is the right time to develop the skills of the students. Every institution has to awake and to provide training centered education to the professional social work students.

1.1 Social Work Profession

Social Work is only the profession deals with humanity, empathy, advocacy and love toward the world. The history of social work started with charity and grew with professionalism in the world at all. Along with this profession number of professional were started to do research and published article in the areas of Social Case Work, Social Group Work and Community Organization. They gave a better message to the community that this profession doesn't mean anything other than dedicated service to the people or needy. It assured the complete welfare of the people and spread the messages of up-liftmen. But when the years were passed the professional quality of social work has come down and the ultimate aim of the profession manipulated. At present the

competence of social work students decreasing and the number of professional social workers are increasing. The reason is the number of colleges is greater than ever. Before two decade's it was very difficult to get an employment when a student who completed his/her PG in Social Work. But after a decayed there are number of opportunities in NRHM, Multi-National Companies, Medical and Psychiatric Social Work Departments...etc... Being a wide field there are many opportunities to work international level also. But the competence of Indian social work students are not as per the expectation of global wants. Even though it noticed by many Indian and international social work experts and social scientists there is no an effective change.

1.1.1 The Changing Concept of Social Work Education

Still being a degree and post graduate subject, social work has not attained its popularity in rural and semi urban areas. In urban areas and employed people or social activist only realized the importance of social work education and they decided to send their children to opt social work as a P G course. Because compare to any other course it was very easy to get a job soon after the course. Before 25 years, social work education was a task. The student wants to go Mangalore, Tamilnadu, Delhi, Mumbai or other state where the course is available. At present colleges and students are increased in a wide range and thereby the professionalism went off and commercialization rised. The parents were ready to spend a huge amount to complete the course. Many resigned from their present job and joined to study social work. The aim is to get a job without much difficult. Here the concept of social work education has changed. Nobody thought the basic skills to learn social work as professionally. That's why in international level the status of Indian social workers coming down. A few colleges are taking initiative to exchange their students with foreign universities and the exchanged students are not able to perform as per the expectation of the foreign universities. Because many Indian social work students are lacking skills in decision making, critical thinking, creative thinking, problem solving, effective communication, inter personal relationship, coping with stress and emotion , report writing, documentation and do research in the relevant field. It is too difficult to challenge the foreign universities needs by Indian social work students. The reason behind is the commercialization of the profession and the students incorrect perspective on social work education. Furthermore the students are thinking that the ultimate aim of social work education is to be employed or settled.

1.1.1.1 Present Scenario

At present the social work profession losing its professionalism and along with this the level of enthusiasm of the students is going down. An international standard of Indian social workers is not up to mark. In this globalization age social work students are serving the people without proper skills, knowledge and experience. Many students are getting admission without skills and completing the course acquiring nothing. Is this the personal problems of the students or the lack of training? Or is this enough for the profession? During the admission whether the universities, colleges and teachers are failing to explain about the course in the broad way including syllabus, observation visit, rural camp/tribal camp/ field work and field work report, assignment submission, internal examination, internal mark, seminar presentation, viva, national tour, research, block placement.... Etc... or no students aware about the scope as well as the employment opportunities in this field? The social work profession offers opportunities in hospitals, companies, NGOs, teaching and training institutions and many more organizations. But the competence of the social work students is in cross road. That's why most of the corporate companies, hospitals and NGOs are not appointing social workers as their permanent staff. It is all purely as temporary basis. Only the reason that the course completed students are not good in communication, decision making, understand the individual difference, problem solving and case management. Even though they are trained most of them are very poor in documentation and publication. No students are capable to write and maintain documents and also filing the data. No students come forward to publish their article other than doctoral students. During their MSW course minimum one research should be completed. That also purely the part of completion of the course. The findings, suggestions and the research results kept in the thesis itself for ever. This is the real face of present professional social work students. If we couldn't overcome this dilemma the profession would die or freeze and the Indian social work profession would be a talk in India as well as International level.

1.2 The real reason

Even though the social work discipline is a training and research oriented course the contribution of students in this area is very less. This doesn't mean that it is due to lack of motivation from the teachers. The real reasons can be divided as five

1.2.1 CURRICULUM CENTERED

1.2.2 Choice Based Credit System: The Indian universities are offering BSW, MSW, M.Phil and PhD in social work. BSW and MSW is offering by distance mode by Indira Gandhi National Open University. Annamalai University, Bharathiyar University and some other universities are offering MSW as distance mode. The regular course is following Choice Based Credit System and offering various subjects apart from their subject. But the fact is that several colleges are offering subjects to the students based on the availability of the staff and not as

per the universities instructions. If the universities and colleges concentrating the development of students Skills in decision making, critical thinking, creative thinking, problem solving, effective communication, inter personal relationship, coping with stress and emotion, report writing, documentation and basic computer and internet searching by providing Life Skills Education and Training during the P G studies, it would be very useful for them and it leads to the sustainability of job. It may a reason for incapability of the students and flee from the field or unfit in the field.

1.2.3 Aptitude Test: Universities are conducting aptitude test before the MSW admission. But it is not effective. Most of the self finance colleges are doing this only for name sake. It helps the students to get admission in self finance colleges without acquiring pass mark. It shows that the foundation of professionalism of the course is going down. An aptitude test never finds the best social work student. The winners proved that they are the brilliant students. But it is very easy to get high mark in competition examination if a student worked hard. The interested students can achieve best in this degree based examination. Here there is a question. Those who couldn't score well in the aptitude test are they ineligible to learn social work? How we can conclude that they are not fit for social work education? But we can't forget that the field of social work aims both practical and subject knowledge. To find the practical knowledge the universities are suggesting group discussion. In the test the students who scored well is called by the university to attend the group discussion. The group discussion contains discussions on particular topics and some activities and finalizing the selected students. The selection procedure should be modified it only under the supervision of expert committee. The criteria are Aptitude Test, Group Discussion, Stress Interview, Personal Interview and Orientation Program.

1.2.4 Aptitude Test: It contains questions to measure the current affairs, present social problems, contributions of social reformers and social workers for the social development and welfare, welfare programs....etc....

Group Discussion: It aims to identify the group behavior of the student, adjustment, acceptance, initiative, leadership quality, agree the ones leadership, opinion express, decision making power, aesthetic, arts and cultural talents...etc... Based on the result in both aptitude test and group discussion prepare a list and give weightage for group activities and achievements in co-scholastic areas. So the real social workers can be identified.

1.2.5 Stress Interview: The social work field instructs to follow the empathetical approach. But the level of emotional maturity of social work students is very poor, especially in new generation and not able to cope with their stress and feelings. But the teachers can identify this only after the admission sought. It arrest the teachers to exhibits his/her emotional maturity towards the students. Here the social work principles don't work. So before giving admission we have to test the emotional maturity of the students by conducting stress interview by giving brain storming, prediction of behavior in un-expected condition, mental ability, reaction of mild shock... etc...

1.2.6 Personal Interview: In this session the interviewer collecting personal details from the students and giving an outline of the course.

1.2.7 Orientation Program: Here the students directly understand the course in the broad way including syllabus, observation visit, rural camp/tribal camp/ field work and field work report, assignment submission, internal examination, internal mark, seminar presentation, viva, national tour, research, block placement, job opportunity...Etc...

1.2.8 Limitation: Above all helps the students to know the characteristic, structure and scope of social work education. But the limitation is, if follow the same in self finance college it has to be wind up. But producing unproductive generation better stop the parent production.

1.3 STUDENT CENTERED

- a) Many students fail to do the responsibilities and maintain time management.
- b) Not able to maintain effective relationship with teachers
- c) It is only by the intellectual incapability and lack of emotional maturity of the students.
- d) The ultimate aim of the students is to finish the course.
- e) Students fail to admit the deep and influence of the course/ profession.
- f) Most of the students are not initiative to attend national or international conference and not ready to present papers.
- g) The majority students are not proficient in SPSS, using computer and internet searching.
- h) Nearly everyone not ready to get new experience by research and field work. Interested to do follow what the seniors did.
- i) Most of the students are not ready to take risk. That's why no good research and field work report is coming out.
- j) Students are syllabus Oriented and lack of reading is the major problem to attain the professional quality.
- k) Students are opting their specialization based on the job opportunities. Not their personal capacity or personal wish.

- l) The students hesitate to follow field work instruction such as uniform, field work report submission, community organization program, case work and group work presentation....Etc....

1.4 TEACHER CENTERED

- a) The numbers of experienced and qualified professors are very less other than university colleges.
- b) Most of the professors under the category of guest faculty and whenever they are getting better opportunity they may leave the college and thereby the students facing trouble.
- c) The unity among the professors is not fruitful.
- d) The cold war between the efficient and inefficient professors is a silent killer in the department and it leads to the partition of the students.
- e) This maladjustment utilizing by many unskilled students and get more marks, especially in field work, research and internals. Later they would be in the teaching field, without knowing what is professional social work.
- f) By this immature behavior of professors the international standard totally destroying.
- g) The University Grant Commission is concentrating only NET qualification to teach university level. A person with PG and NET or PhD doesn't mean that he or she is fit for teaching. Here the teaching and training aptitude has to check as practical especially in social work education.
- h) Because a it doesn't mean that qualified teacher is not able to perform both teaching and training aspects.

1.5 TRAINING CENTERED

Being training oriented course social work students want to undergo training program under an agency. It may hospitals, NGOs, industry, counseling centers or any other organization which is providing training for social work students. Many of the training agencies are demanding money. But nobody is there to provide training. The professors teaching the theoretical part of case work, group work, community organization, mental status examination, mini mental status examination, concepts of human recourse management, problems of weaker section and correctional administrationEtc.... But in the field each students have to recognize the real fact. Even though the students paid fees most of the agencies are not ready to provide clients to do case work and group work. A student completing the course without adequate field knowledge as well as the personal experience.

1.6 INDUSTRIAL CENTERED

Before a decayed the industry which means the job provider realized the fact that the competence of social work students is very poor. But they provided job who fulfill the companies needs minimum level. The social work students fully failed in medical and psychiatric social work field and NGO sector. Compare to other social science social work only deals with project management, case work, group work and community organization programs. Research is a pillar of social work. But many students not aware about to prepare a project proposal, to make program description, present a case to the multi disciplinary team and even manage the business executives. The students who specialized in Human Resource Management they are surrendering them under the thump of other professional relevant to this. Which lead to decrease the opportunity in companies/ corporate. In association with this most of the students are insufficient to write report, do case studies and researches, present papers and even to attend conferences.

1.7 CONCLUSION

To protect the dignity of social work profession, this is the right time to look inside and make the social work students more productive member in the society as well as in industry by professionally qualified, experienced and emotionally matured professors. Every institution has to awake and to provide training centered education to develop the skills in decision making, critical thinking, creative thinking, problem solving, effective communication, inter personal relationship, coping with stress and emotion, report writing, documentation and basic computer and internet searching, rules of group behavior, adjustment, acceptance, initiative, leadership quality, agree the ones leadership, opinion express, aesthetic, arts and cultural talents, writing project proposal, program description, present a case to the multi disciplinary team and even manage the business executives by providing Life Skills Education and Training during the P G studies.

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