

# Social Work or Relief Work? A Crisis in Professional Social Work

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## ABSTRACT

Social work is a sharing and caring profession based on scientific methods. This problem solving profession makes people self-reliant and self-dependent when he/she is in any sorts of crises. Thus, it differs from relief work, social services or social welfare delivered during emergence crises. This paper examined the application of professional social work as relief work, which did not bring any change among the beneficiaries; rather it set their mind as opportunist. For this purpose, the programme sponsored by the government of India and implemented by nongovernmental organizations for rehabilitation of the street children (i.e., pavements and slums dwellers, children of sex workers, and so forth) of Metro cities like Kolkata had priority. This evaluative study assessed the progress and changes among 500 street children who were the beneficiaries for 10 years of the programme, selected according to their parental residents/occupation through stratified sampling. Interviews, case studies and group interaction were used to collect data on various aspects, i.e. personal background, education, and occupation of these children. It revealed that after almost 10 years of services, the problem of children was static. Firstly, service delivery system was as relief work. The methods of social work were not implied while the professionals were in implementation. On the other hand, the scope of monitoring and evaluation of the programme by government was suspended due to several reasons. Definitely, the politicalization in human development would be restricted. The problems of suffering would be root out and it should not be a continued process.

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## 1. Introduction

Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversity are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing (Popple and Leighninger 2011; International Federation of Social Workers 2014). So, it is a profession concerned with helping individuals, families, groups and communities to enhance their individual and collective wellbeing. It aims to help people develop their skills and their ability to use their own resources and those of the community to resolve problems. It is concerned with individual and personal problems but also with broader social issues such as poverty, unemployment and domestic violence (Payne 2011).

This is a sharing and caring profession based on scientific methods. It is a recent emerging profession in the field of human welfare. It is a problem solving profession like legal and medical profession (Sheldon and Macdonald 2009). This problem solving profession makes people self-reliant and self-dependent when he/she is in any sorts of crises. While social service, social welfare and relief work is a very much goal oriented to revive the emergent crises of human being in the society who are the downtrodden and suffering population (Mishra 1994).

From Vedas and Purnanas (Hindu scriptures), it refers to as '*karma* theory' (theory of work) that every individual is under two forces - the individual own and his/her social environment as well as the little organism that he/she is. The interaction between the organism and the environment constitutes the life of any individual (Ranganathananda 2013). In the Indian thought, we nurture the theory of '*karma*' (work) which is the result of past life or earlier past of the life. The Karma theory stands for the law of cause and effect applied to the human life and action. It is the eternal assertion of human freedom. When we understand the karma theory wrongly, we think

one's distress due to his/her karma and generally remain indifferent towards our fellow-man who is suffering, thinking that his/her suffering is due to the karma of the unfortunate sufferer. But karma theory tells if it is their karma to suffer, it is our karma to go and help them. Society will develop into a happy interacting medium where we are helping each other to rise higher. The social environment will begin to help to go higher and higher. Everybody should help with other to develop each fullest potential according to one's capacity (Ranganathananda 2013). The social work similarly stands with this karma theory adopting new methods and techniques only.

However, historically social work was emerged from the concept of charity to serve human being in need and it was based on religious goal to occupy a seat of heaven after death. Gradually, it was realized as a duty of good governance to take care of the people during their emergency which was considered as relief work (Frieldlander and Apte 1982).

Nevertheless, after industrial revolution in Britain particularly, social work recognized as profession in the second decade of 20<sup>th</sup> century when a professional body was formed in United States of America at Chicago and it offered a certificate course for this methodical service for the cause of human welfare (Frieldlander and Apte 1982).

In India during colonial rule, we might refer to Sri Rabindranath Tagore who had realized the essence of social work to revive from the peril of suffering innocent of rural India and his Sriniketan Experiment was an example. For India's Independence, he introduced this new profession through involvement of his followers in rural reconstruction at the adjacent villages of Sriniketan of Birbhum district (West Bengal). He contradicted and criticized the methods of freedom movement (non-violent and non-co-operative movement) of M. K. Gandhi, the father of nation. Tagore concentrated his effort to make the rural innocent self-reliant. According to him, self-power/self-energy, co-operation and development (three principles) are the key tools for self-dependent (Sinha 2011). Perhaps, it is the basic principle of social work profession at modern time. Then he

introduced a course/training programme on rural reconstruction and he formulated the latest methods of social work profession.

Thereafter, during the transition period of India's independence Sir Jamshedji Tata, Founder of TATA Group (a Multi-national company of India's origin) was more compassionate when he established the Tata Institute of Social Sciences at Mumbai for providing training on social work (Mathew 1992).

So, a distinct discipline emerged to serve the suffering community or helping people to help themselves. It was considered as professional social work and trained personal was considered academically as professional social workers. They have to follow the following code of ethics - (i) Service - help people in need and address social problems, (ii) Social Justice - challenge social injustices, (iii) Respect the dignity and worth of the person, (iv) Give importance to human relationships, (v) Integrity - behave in a trustworthy manner, and (vi) Competence - practice within the areas of one's areas of expertise and develop and enhance professional skills (National Association of Social Workers 1996).

It obviously differs from social service, social welfare and relief work. Particularly, relief work offer during crisis or emergency caused by disaster in varied forms (natural, political, so forth). It is an emergency support to restore the survival of living beings. There is no such scientific method involved with this. Even, there is no need of any particular professionally trained personnel (excluding medical professional in health crisis) (Mishra 1994). Social worker uses the 'patient capital' for sustainable development as a tool of social change (Kennedy and Novogratz 2010) and it does not match with relief work.

After the independence of India, the new government also adopted the national policy for rehabilitation of people in need as prime goal of country's development. Simultaneously, it welcomes different platforms/associations to fulfil this goal of the welfare state. Among these associations, emergence of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) was a vital one to integrate the voluntary welfare services. On the other part, the new profession of social

worker emerged. However, the services do not bring changes as expected in regards to the concept of social work (Mishra 1994).

We find that Government of India puts its attention for the rehabilitation of children in difficult circumstances aiming to build up strong future of nation under the Ministry of Women and Child Development. Similarly, the Ministry of Labour and Employment and Ministry of Human Resources Development introduced National Child Labour Project and Programme for Urban Deprived Children under Sarva Shikshya Abhijan respectively. The street children (i.e. pavements and slums dwellers, children of sex workers, and child labour, and so forth) of Metro cities like Kolkata had priority. For their rehabilitation, the Ministry of Women and Child Development of Government of India introduced the Integrated Programme for Street Children in 1993-94 and it was implemented in association with NGOs. This scheme included education, nutrition, recreation, counselling services for both street children, for their psycho-social development, and their parents, for their attitudinal changes towards care and attention for their children's upbringing, and vocational training for street children between the age group of 6-14 years. Another two programmes as mentioned above targeted the restoration of lost childhood and the promotion of healthy childhood development.

Interestingly after almost 10 years of services, the problems of children were in a static position. Firstly, service delivery system was as relief work. The methods of social work were not implied while the social work professionals were in implementation. They only carried out their job as per the order of the members of NGOs who were basically non-professional and pursued their own profit and the preservation of their prestigious life style and life choices. Here, the professional social workers were spectators because of threaten to lose their job. On the other hand, the scope of monitoring and evaluation of government was suspended due to several reasons.

## 2. Methods

### *2.1 Objectives of the study*

The objective of this study was to assess changes in the life of street children after 10 years of intervention. What was the mode of service delivery – social work or relief work? What were the hindrances of implication of professional methods of social work for sustainable development of children in need (street children) and how it was failure to bringing changes in attitude of service providers and beneficiaries?

### *2.2 Participants*

Five hundred children of both sexes considered as street children living with their parents/guardian at authorized/unauthorized slums ('jhupri' at canal side) or at pavements or at brothels of Kolkata, only metro city of eastern India, were selected randomly through stratified purposive sampling for examining their childhood situation which was in the peril. These children were the beneficiaries of different child welfare schemes (i.e. Integrated Programme for Street Children, National Child Labour Project and Programme for urban deprived children under 'Sarva Shikshya Abhijan') run by different NGOs for at least 10 years. For the purpose of this evaluation, these children were categorized in three groups in a ratio of 2: 7:1 - children of sex workers (n = 100), slums and pavement dwellers living with their parents (n=400) and orphan (n = 50) respectively. (Total no. of children = 100 + 350 + 50 = 500). They were from poor families and they were out of proper parental care and attention needed to be productive citizen. Their childhood was considered as a lost one and they were in a vicious cycle of deprivation that would pattern themselves after their parents.

## **2.3 Procedure**

For this evaluative study, a mixed research design was employed. To assess and evaluate the situational change of street children in terms of their socio-economic, parental status of occupation and schooling as well as educational development, etc., quantitative methods of data collection were employed. Simultaneously, qualitative data were employed for the purpose of exploring the views of beneficiaries (street children) and their parents on the mode of service and how they had taken it for their improvement in future living. Qualitative data were also collected from service providers to know their notion about social work and changes occurred among stakeholders after 10 years of intervention.

## **2.4 Research tools**

Structured interviews were employed for the collection of (quantitative) information on their socio-economic background, their parental status of occupation, living status, schooling and so on. Changes in attitude and educational development as well as occupation after 10 years of these children were compared. Case studies, individual interaction, meeting with the parents, focus group discussion and the opinion of the NGOs' personnel who were attached as intervention agent with these children were other methods of data collection. Their remarks on the programme's benefit and how they availed it was discussed in case studies transcribed in this study.

## **3. Results**

### ***3.1 Dynamics of children beneficiaries***

The identity of a child is generally confined by his/her parents' identity. It

considers his/her race, caste and other. This is valid in all societies. The children in this study were also identified by their parents' occupation and residential arrangements. For instance, we assume that the identity of the children of sex workers and slum/pavement dwellers is influenced by their parents' occupation / residence. Then, their race and caste are also considered as part of their identity. The child is the social product who brings change in the status of a couple (Sharma 2003). Although the marriage and birth of a child is only a natural process and it does not consider as culture. Ever since they married, all parents have dreams and plans concerning the upbringing of their children. But it does not necessarily happen in reality due to socio-economic causes.

**Table 1:** *Children's background according to their parental resident/occupation and mother's tongue*

| Parental resident/<br>occupation   | Mother tongue |               |               |               |                               |               |              |              | Total         |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
|  | Bengali       |               |               |               | Hindi/other regional language |               |              |              |               |
|  | Hindu         |               | Muslim        |               | Hindu                         |               | Muslim       |              |               |
|  | M             | F             | M             | F             | M                             | F             | M            | F            |               |
| Red-light area<br>(Children<br>of female<br>sex workers)                       | 14<br>(2.8%)  | 16<br>(3.2%)  | 15<br>(3%)    | 17<br>(3.4%)  | 8<br>(1.6%)                   | 8<br>(1.6%)   | 10<br>(2%)   | 12<br>(2.4%) | 100<br>(20%)  |
| Slum/pavement<br>dwellers<br>living with<br>their parents                      | 55<br>(11%)   | 47<br>(9.4%)  | 38<br>(7.6%)  | 42<br>(8.4%)  | 64<br>(12.8%)                 | 62<br>(12.4%) | 22<br>(4.4%) | 20<br>(4%)   | 350<br>(70%)  |
| Orphan living<br>with their<br>guardian<br>(relatives)<br>at slum/<br>pavement | 8<br>(1.6%)   | 6<br>(1.2%)   | 3<br>(0.6%)   | 4<br>(0.8%)   | 8<br>(1.6%)                   | 7<br>(1.4%)   | 6<br>(1.2%)  | 8<br>(1.6%)  | 50<br>(10%)   |
| Total  | 77<br>(15.4%) | 69<br>(13.8%) | 56<br>(11.2%) | 63<br>(12.6%) | 80<br>(16%)                   | 77<br>(15.4%) | 38<br>(7.6%) | 40<br>(8%)   | 500<br>(100%) |

Source: Field Work

The children's background was drawn according to their mothers'



tongue, religion and parental residence/occupation because parents of the informants were migrant population of different religious (Hindu and Muslim) background and they were from different states of India. The division of states was mainly done on the basis of the mother tongue of particular population groups (e.g. West Bengal for Bengali speaking population, Maharastra for Marathi speaking, and Odissa for Oriya speaking population, etc.) Traditionally, the mother tongue and religious faith determine their cultural practices. It is a cause of their backwardness and human development indicators. We find that children's education, especially girls' education, etc. is trapped within the realm of this. In case of the informants of this study, it was not exception. Their urban-affinity did not bring changes in their mind set and it is dominated by their religious belief and they think that the work of their past life is responsible for their present status. Thus, they were also categorized in respect of their religion. Thus, table 1 described that of these children of female sex workers (20%), 12.4% children's' mother tongue was Bengali and out of which 6% of them was Hindu and 6.4% of them was from Muslim community. Rest of them (7.6%) was either Hindi speaking or other regional languages. Further, 36.4% of the children of slum/pavements dwellers living with their parents (out of 70%) was Bengali speaking which included 20.4% from Hindu and 16% of them was from Muslim community. Rest of them (33.6%) was either Hindi or other regional languages speaking. Of them 8.6% was Muslim by faith.

About 10% of them were orphans living with their guardian/relatives. Out of which 4.2% was Bengali speaking and next part of them was either Hindi or other regional languages speaking. In case of Bengali as mother tongue, Hindu was double comparing to Muslim and Hindi/other regional languages speaking had almost equal representation so far as their religion was concerned.

### ***3.2. Changing occupation and educational status***

Although the prime aim to these mentioned schemes/programmes was to

rehabilitate these children beyond their generational representation and integration of them into the mainstream/larger society. It was formulated as an initiative for implementation of the child rights protection laws and acts. It is evident that parental background and their care and attention towards their children's up-bringing would be most influential factors to facilitate meaningful childhood and its development. Thereafter, other factors and characters like education, teachers' attitude and environment are responsibly to be impacted in their future life. These children were not getting intensive parenting because of their parental social, economic, educational and cultural backgrounds. So, these programmes had essentially needed to protect them from their vicious cycle.

But it was the prime hindrance when these programmes failed to reach its desired goal because of its mode of implementation as relief work. It did not help to make them self-reliant and independent. The components of these programmes were the stimuli to enjoy their childhood. To them, these services had been helped to restore their energy to go through their own. The level of implementation did not bring their changes in psyche, but these were a temporary relief of their crises. The evaluation had described their changing dynamics of their childhood in terms of their educational attainment, occupation and other aspects, beside their very own life at red-light area, slum or pavement.

Table 2 describes the educational status of these children during the period of this study. From this table, we found that among the children of female sex workers living at brothel, highest percent (11.8%) possessed their primary education and girls were almost double (7%) comparing to the boys (4.8%). Then, 5.6% of them attended class V-VIII standard, and 2% of them attended class IX-X. Only 0.6% of them attended higher secondary (10+2) and above standard of education.

The children living with their parents (slum/pavement dwellers) showed the similar nature of progress in their educational status. Of them, 33% possessed primary education and girls were 1% more than boys. Thirty percent of them attended class V-VIII and 1.2% of boys were more than girls.

Only 6% of them attended class IX-X standard of education while 1% attended higher secondary (10+2) and above education. It revealed that only 0.2% of boys were more than girls.

**Table 2:** *Educational status of children according to their parental resident/occupation*

| Parental<br>resident/occu<br>pation  | Education status |                |                |               |              |              |  |             | Total         |
|--|------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--|-------------|---------------|
|  | Primary          |                | Class V-VIII   |               | Class IX-X   |              | Higher<br>Secondary<br>(10+2)<br>and above |             |               |
|  | M                | F              | M              | F             | M            | F            | M  | F           |               |
| Red-light area<br>(Children of<br>female sex<br>workers)                       | 24<br>(4.8%)     | 35<br>(7%)     | 16<br>(3.2%)   | 12<br>(2.4%)  | 6<br>(1.2%)  | 4<br>(0.8%)  | 1<br>(0.2%)                                | 2<br>(0.4%) | 100<br>(20%)  |
| Slum/paveme<br>nt dwellers<br>living there<br>with parents                     | 80<br>(16%)      | 85<br>(17%)    | 78<br>(15.6%)  | 72<br>(14.4%) | 18<br>(3.6%) | 12<br>(2.4%) | 3<br>(0.6%)                                | 2<br>(0.4%) | 350<br>(70%)  |
| Orphan living<br>with their<br>guardian<br>(relatives) at<br>slum/paveme<br>nt | 13<br>(2.6%)     | 16<br>(3.2%)   | 7<br>(1.4%)    | 6<br>(1.2%)   | 4<br>(0.8%)  | 2<br>(0.4%)  | 1<br>(0.2%)                                | 1<br>(0.2%) | 50<br>(10%)   |
| Total  | 117<br>(23.4%)   | 136<br>(27.2%) | 101<br>(20.2%) | 90<br>(18%)   | 28<br>(5.6%) | 18<br>(3.6%) | 5<br>(1%)                                  | 5<br>(1%)   | 500<br>(100%) |

Source: Field Work

5.8% of the children (orphans) attended primary education, and boys and girls variation was 0.6% more in case of girls. Among them, 2.6% attended class V-VIII and 1.2% including 0.4% girls attended class IX-X. Lastly, 0.2% each of them attended higher secondary (10+2) and above standard.

We find that the children in our study dropped out from their schools/colleges after a certain period of education. None of them did

complete their higher education while they had been involved in some works (paid or non-paid). There were different reasons behind it as they shared in table 3. Of them, 32.8% children were dropped out due to parental pressure for domestic chores and earning. Among them, 6.8% children was from brothel, 22% of them were living with their parents, and rest of them (4%) was orphans.

**Table 3: Reasons for dropout**

| Reasons for dropout                                   | Parental resident/occupation                       |               |  |                |  |              | Total          |
|---|--|---------------|--|----------------|--|--------------|----------------|
|   | Red-light area<br>(Children of female sex workers) |               | Slum/pavement dwellers living with parents |                | Orphan living with guardian (relatives) at slum/pavement |              |                |
|   | M  | F             | M  | F              | M  | F            |                |
| Parental pressure for domestic assistance and earning | 14<br>(2.8%)                                       | 20<br>(4%)    | 52<br>(10.4%)                              | 58<br>(11.6%)  | 8<br>(1.6%)  | 12<br>(2.4%) | 164<br>(32.8%) |
| Non-support & poor economy                            | 10<br>(2%)   | 8<br>(1.6%)   | 36<br>(7.2%)                               | 4<br>(0.8%)    | 8<br>(1.6%)  | 6<br>(1.2%)  | 108<br>(21.8%) |
| No future after getting education                     | 7<br>(1.4%)  | 2<br>(0.4%)   | 14<br>(2.8%)                               | 16<br>(3.2%)   | 2<br>(0.4%)  | -            | 41<br>(8.2%)   |
| Poor performance                                      | 14<br>(2.8%)                                       | 15<br>(3%)    | 42<br>(8.4%)                               | 35<br>(7%)     | 6<br>(1.2%)  | 3<br>(0.6%)  | 115<br>(23%)   |
| Others/married  | 2<br>(0.4%)  | 8<br>(1.6%)   | 35<br>(7%)                                 | 22<br>(4.4%)   | 1<br>(0.2%)  | 4<br>(0.8%)  | 72<br>(14.4%)  |
| Total   | 47<br>(9.4%)                                       | 53<br>(10.6%) | 179<br>(35.8%)                             | 171<br>(34.2%) | 25<br>(5%)   | 25<br>(5%)   | 500<br>(100%)  |

Source: Field Work

Secondly, 21.6% of them were out of education because their parents were non-supportive for their higher education and some of their parents were poor. Among them, 3.6% children were from brothel, 15.2% of them were living with their parents at slums/pavements, and orphans were 2.8% under this category. Third reason of dropped out (8.2%) was that there was

no future of education as they thought. Of them, 1.6% was the children of female sex workers, 6% of them were slums/pavements dwellers living with their parents, and 0.4% of them were orphans. Twenty three percent of them left their school due to poor performance in their examinations and out of which, 5.8% of them was from brothel, 15.4% of them was living with their parents at slums/pavements, and rest of them (1.8%) was orphans. Finally, 14.4% of them shared other reasons of their dropped out from education. Specially, 6.2% girls were got married.

**Table 4:** *Occupational status of the children informants*

| Parental resident/occu pation                             | Occupation status   |               |                               |               |   |              |              |               | Total         |
|---|---------------------|---------------|-------------------------------|---------------|---|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|
|   | Domestic assistance |               | Assisting parents for earning |               | Engaged as labour in locally available jobs |              | Others       |               |               |
|   | M                   | F             | M                             | F             | M   | F            | M            | F             |               |
| Red-light area (Children of female sex workers)           | 7<br>(1.4%)         | 13<br>(2.6%)  | 8<br>(1.6%)                   | 12<br>(2.4%)  | 22<br>(4.4%)                                | 9<br>(1.8%)  | 10<br>(2%)   | 19<br>(3.8%)  | 100<br>(20%)  |
| Slum/paveme nt dwellers living with parents               | 22<br>(4.4%)        | 69<br>(13.8%) | 58<br>(11.6%)                 | 41<br>(8.2%)  | 80<br>(16%)                                 | 23<br>(4.6%) | 19<br>(3.8%) | 38<br>(7.6%)  | 350<br>(70%)  |
| Orphan living with guardian (relatives) at slum/paveme nt | 5<br>(1%)           | 8<br>(1.6%)   | 7<br>(1.4%)                   | 4<br>(0.8%)   | 12<br>(2.4%)                                | 7<br>(1.4%)  | 1<br>(0.2)   | 6<br>(1.2%)   | 50<br>(10%)   |
| Total   | 34<br>(6.8%)        | 90<br>(18%)   | 73<br>(14.6%)                 | 57<br>(11.4%) | 114<br>(22.8%)                              | 39<br>(7.8%) | 30<br>(6%)   | 63<br>(12.6%) | 500<br>(100%) |

Source: Field work

From table 4, we find that 24.8% of these children were involved in domestic assistance and out of which 18% of them were girls. Twenty five percent were assisting their parents/guardians for earning and of them, 11.4% were girls. Among these children, 30.6% were engaged as labour in locally available jobs and of them, 22.8% children were boys. It revealed that

18.6% of them were doing other jobs and out of which, 12.6% were girls and boys were double statistically.

### ***3.3. Children's behavioural pattern (before joining the programme and after 10 years of attending the programme)***

The informants of this study have typically grown up in an obnoxious milieu. Their social, cultural and economic milieu can best be described by referring to these communities with the notion of 'struggle for existence'. Overcrowding, sanitation and water problems, inter- and intra- personal relationships in their families learned them to be quarrelsome, arrogant, and violent. From their very childhood, they used to witness this as spectators and it gradually pushed them to become participants. The life style and life choices in their daily life particularly in their community influenced to adopt various aspects like food habits, drinking habits, smoking habits and sexuality, etc. and they acted as the renewal of their older generation. They learned to realize the importance of money as well as wealth in their life from their early childhood and so, they learned to earn it from different sources easily in exchange of their labour or assistance. They also used to face the effect of their truncated family relations. The marriage and marital relations as well as family relation were just as a cultural practice to them.

After 10 years of intervention by NGOs under the schemes of Integrated Programme for Street Children, National Child Labour Project and Programme for Urban Deprived Children, no significant changes were brought to the above situation, except in those very few cases where the parental/guardian role was dominant.

It would be discussed according to different qualitative stages of their life - behavioural pattern, various habits, educational and occupational status and their involvement in community life, and so forth. These children were addicted to consume tobacco, liquor and marijuana, etc., from their childhood and this habit did not leave. The problem of sexual relation and sexuality was in same state. They were abused themselves regardless of their

gender sexually as a common phenomenon. A portion of them adopted their stealthy behaviour.

Generally from their infancy, they were arrogant, quarrelsome and dominating and so forth. It was as usual after 10 years of services by the NGOs. The programmes did not bring any change in their behaviour. Although in the guideline of service delivery, it was laid down to provide counselling services for their psychological changes, was not taken as granted in reality.

**Case 1:**

Champa (12) was a girl of a street family of Bagmari area (ward 29 of Kolkata Municipal Corporation). She was a beneficiary of Integrated Program for Street Children from her age of 5 years. She was the only girl of her parents, out of 8 children. She attended the drop in centres throughout day. At Morning from 8:00 am to 10:30 am she was in drop in centre under Integrated Program for Street Children. From 11:00 am to 2:00 pm, she used to attend another centre run by another NGO under National Child Labour Project and from 4:00 am to 7:00 pm she used to attend another centre under Integrated Program for street children run by another one NGO. So, her routine was to stay outside her house from morning to evening.

During this period, she learnt to read and write Bengali. But her performance was poor. The numerical skill was not good as expected. She was not admitted in school ever. Her personal health and hygiene were poor.

When her parents were asked about her daughter's education and her future, they shared that they allowed her to attend the centres because both of them used to do work outside their community. No one was in their family to look after her. So, in these centres, they used to provide food and different gifts at different times. These benefits were good because the governments used to provide it through these NGOs. If no one could attend, they would miss it. In their family, education was not necessary because they would arrange her marriage when she would attend at least 15 years of age.

The interview with Champ reminded that she enjoyed all the materials i.e. food and gifts. She got opportunities to stay outside her house and she enjoyed the scope of playing with her peers. Here, in her words, 'there was no pressure and punishment and *didimoni* (lady teacher) and master (male teacher) oiled to attend regularly'.

### ***3.4. Children's and their parental attitude towards welfare activities***

The children and their parents were accustomed with poverty. That's why, various services were rendered from various corners and it was their governments which were providing through different clubs (NGOs). They

felt that these clubs were getting more, but they used to provide them less. So, it was an opportunity to them to access it from all directions. They only used to access the materials support because other qualitative support, especially educational arrangement, was not so urgent, as they felt that it was not be helpful for their progress. It was for rich people, and they had to do their own occupation within their own system. So, there was a lack of interest in education.

On the other side, the NGOs working for their welfare and rehabilitation did not reach their target and they failed to change their attitude, mainly because the service delivery system was a relief work which used to deliver at the time of crisis.

**Case 2:**

Bikash (16) was the eldest son of his parents living with his 3 younger siblings at Bagmari slum of Kolkata. His father was shoe maker and mother was housewife. His mother also used to assist his father regularly. Bikash had joined in drop-in centre at his age of 6 years. He was admitted to formal school and completed his class VIII standard. Thereafter, he stopped his education and joined with his father for leather work and he was planning to migrate at Mumbai for better earning from same trade. In his words, his parents were not able to provide support for further education and it was not guaranteed that he would get job after that.

From the drop-in centre, he availed remedial coaching, nutrition and other benefits. But the service did not change their attitude to break their nexus with their very own culture for a better life.

**Case 3:**

Kalpana (26) was an orphan girl who was grown up under custody of her paternal aunt, a widower and worked as maidservant. She lived in slum of Kolkata. She was a beneficiary of this program from her age of 7 years. By that time, she admitted into primary school with the initiative of her guardian. But she joined this program to get some benefit i.e. remedial coaching and educational support for continuation of her study. She used to get from this program. Unfortunately, when she promoted to Class-IX, the NGO stopped these support because of her age bar (crossing her age limit -14 years). So, she tried to continue her study through a job of maid servant. She passed secondary examination. She did not get any scope for her further study. So, she dropped out from education. She involved in job from where she was trafficked and had to marry before her age of 18 years. From her study, it was realized that it was a relief service. According to the principles and techniques of social work, she was not empowered. Consequently, she was pushed into their very own fate and fortune.



## 4. Discussion

### 4.1 Failure of NGOs bringing their attitudinal changes

Emergence of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) was a significant aspect of serving the poor or downtrodden. Regulations of its jobs were very much relevant to the society. It perhaps differed from charitable organizations which services are basically designed as relief work. On the other hand, NGOs' services were more professional in nature. It would not only deliver relief services or welfare activities, it would dedicate to perform social work which would a step to resolve one's problem from the root forever. Making a person self-reliant was its prime goal. The act for registration (The Societies Registration Act 1860) of a NGO had not any strict rule because any group of citizen could be formed it with some basic objectives and its services would be voluntary in nature. No remuneration or benefit would be enjoyed by any member of the registered NGOs. But human resources of any nature (professional or non-professional) appointed by the managing committee would be eligible to get their remuneration from the NGOs.

But the situation had changed. People used to form a NGO with an aim of an alternative earning source. It used to fulfil a dual purpose of social prestige in the society and earning money. It was due to the problems of unemployment and disadvantages of earning in Indian society. So, they used to earn alternatively through NGOs. It was a process of deprivation of downtrodden. They behave as '*rakshak e bhakhak*' (a person as protector is promoting atrocities instead of eradicating them). The problems of downtrodden was deeply rooted and it ran into vicious cycle. The NGO's personnel involved in corruption and they used to siphon the money which was received as grant/donation from both government and other sources. They made a self-ruled system to adjust with the agencies personnel by sharing of bribes by which the particular grant/donation would be safely dealt with its possible continuation.

The leadership of the NGOs indicated that either they had little

educational and personal background or they were from a so-called prestigious background. But the mission was the same, to enjoy benefits from a non-profit making affair.

**Case 4:**

Sandip was a postgraduate in social work. He joined in a non-governmental organization as project coordinator of Integrated Program for Street Children sponsored by Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India in 1998. He served for the post for about 8 years. His job assignment was to supervise 10 drop-in-centres under this project. He did not allow interfering with the financial management of the project. The overall management of this program was included to deal with staff problems, report writing and to organise other programs, i.e. exhibition visits and picnic, as prescribed by the managing committee of this organisation time to time. He used to visit every drop-in-centre at least once in month to check the functioning i.e. regular attendance of the staff, children's attendance and whether the staff used to regularly provide nutrition to the children, etc.

He was not involved to deal with counselling and other aspects i.e. children education as step for their rehabilitation. He had a little contact with the community people as well as parents of these children. Practically, he did not practice his learned social work skills which were achieved from his education. He used only to maintain a routine administration and his employers used him to designing project proposal by which they would get fund from other sources. When he was asked about his professionalism and practice of professional skills, he replied: 'I studied social work to get job easily. I did my routine duties which were assigned by the employers. I would leave the job when I would get another with more incentive'. But what would be the future of these children for which the above program undertake? He replied that it was not his matter of consideration. He had no commitment in this regard.

#### ***4.2 Role of professional social worker***

A professional social worker possessed a post graduate degree in social work recruited according to the statutory norms of the scheme for getting fund. He/she performed his/her duty as programme head to overlook overall programme. But financial control was beyond his/her control because it was absolutely managed and controlled by the managing committee of the concerned NGOs. He/she used to play strictly administrative role and sometimes, he/she got chance to interact with beneficiaries. He/she only instructed the field workers (street educator of drop-in-centres) and used to supervise some mandatory reports for

documentation purpose. The qualitative progress of the beneficiaries was hardly intervened. The quantitative achievement was targeted. Beside this, he/she used to perform other administrative jobs i.e. formulation/preparation of project application for funding for other projects from different sources and reporting writing, etc. were his/her prime duties.

The application/practice of professional skills of social work i.e. methods, tools and techniques which were taught in form of social case work, social group work, community organization, social work research and others were just left. The profession of social work directed to make people self-dependent. The conversation with such professional social worker might be transcribed. When he was asked whether he was practicing the methods of social worker, he replied:

*‘Here there is no need or no scope of practicing. Please listen - I have studied the subject only to get a job in the crisis of job market. Further, I have not got scope to study my favourite or the subject of my interest. I had no other opportunity beside the study of social work. That’s why, I studied it. Nevertheless, there is poor salary in this job and further, it was very unstable. So, I am searching for better job. It is not my concerned to mainstream these children. I am doing only job for some experiences which would be needed for my prosperity’.*

#### **4.3. Role of government agencies sponsoring the programme**

The concerned ministry of India’s government sponsoring this scheme was appointed two parallel agencies – i) department of women and child development and social welfare of state government of West Bengal and ii) another agency under control of a social work institute known as ‘Child Line’ which was also sponsored by the same ministry for monitoring of this programme. The deputed officials of the two agencies monitored the programme once in the mid of each year using same set of questionnaires. Both the agencies did not follow any techniques of supervision and monitoring according to the methods of social work administration. They used to investigate the programme quantitatively within a short period

(hardly 3 days for 500 beneficiaries). They just filled up the questionnaires in consultation with the NGOs and enquired some documents. Sometimes, (s)he used to complete the job at the office of NGOs. If (s)he visited the drop-in-centres, (s)he used to only overlook the attendance register and to count the beneficiaries attended on the particular date of visit. Sometimes, they asked whether the beneficiaries were getting the services laid down in the scheme or not. They hardly interacted with the beneficiaries and their parents/guardian as well as community members. They did not overlook the qualitative progress and achievement which might lead their rehabilitation. Their investigation was a routine job to expedite the release of grant-in-aid. Consequently, it might be insignificant in relation to the problems and its solution.

## **5. Conclusion**

The social work is a problem solving profession that makes a suffering individual self-reliant in all terms and it empowers one's potentiality for the cause of a happy living. As a separate and specialized discipline, it trains personnel academically who are considered as professional social workers. That's why professionally trained social workers are different in their identity from political workers who many times claim as social worker. Professional social workers have their code of ethics and their work is methodical which fulfils the goals to make an individual or group or community self-reliant. Particularly, the methods of social work should get priority in any developmental programme and the scope would be given to the professional social workers. Definitely, the politicalization in human development should be restricted. Social workers should make the people self-dependent by enlightening the pathways. The goal would not be the making of opportunists which are a basic instrument to the individuals without any such training on social work. The problems of suffering would be rooted out and it should not be a continued process. If we can do the same, the beauty of global world can reach the people from lower to higher

in spite of various religious and social as well as economic differences.

This profession differs from relief work, social service and social welfare due to its mode of application. In this context, we say relief work as an emergency help.

From this study, we find that the services for the urban deprived children were as a mode of relief work which generally ensures during any emergency. All the programmes for welfare and rehabilitation of street children of Kolkata were similar, so far as service delivery was concerned. Only the sources of funding were different, but the funding was for the same beneficiaries. The revival or re-instate of the lost childhood for the sake of progressive nation was far beyond its desired paper declared goal. Only it was a fulfilment of political agenda.

The five hundred children of female sex workers, pavement/slum dwellers including orphans were availed these services only to manage their suffering childhood. The environmental situation, parental economy and parental care and attention towards their children's future did not meet the need of their intensive care for up-brining. Their religious and cultural faiths were their burden which did not change after long urban affinity. They mostly believed that it was their fate and fortune which was transformed according to their '*karma*' (work) at their past life. But they felt that it was the nation's responsibility to arrange some relief work. The non-governmental agencies that took the responsibility to implement these programmes did not bring any change among the beneficiaries and their parents through their service delivery strategies. But these non-governmental organizations took it as strategy for their name, fame and earning money from this designated programme. The authority/management of these organizations were initiated these platforms for specific purpose of their alternative earning.

This mode of service was also supported by the designated public servants who were responsible to monitor and evaluate the progress of these programmes. They only investigated the fund flow in papers, but the qualitative progress of these programmes was left. It was a hide and seeks matter when they used to accept money for continuation of grant-in-aid.

Even we find that the overlapping of same services was clearly noted. So, single beneficiary used to avail benefits from different sources. The functional heads for implementation of these programmes were professionally trained social workers that were more concerned to satisfy their appointing authority and for their future career. The professionalism/practice of social work according to their training was practically absent/insignificant.

Consequently, we find that after 10 years of service delivery, there was no significant change achieved to revive these children's situation. It revealed that only 2% of them attended higher secondary and above education. Among them, 50.6% dropped out at primary level and 38.2% of them attended class V-VIII standard education. They shared that 32.8% of them left their education due to parental pressure for domestic help and earning. Twenty three percent (23%) of them were due to poor performance and 21.8% of them were not getting support from their parents. Even 6.8% of these girls were got married. Their occupational status revealed that 30.4% of them engaged as labour at their locality, and 26% of them were assisting their parents. We find that intervention strategies/service delivery system under these programmes failed to bring attitudinal change among the parents of the informants because it was relief work and it did not make them independent. Parents were dependent for their children's care and attention. These programmes failed to educate or to sensitize the parents that the children's up-bringing was their own duty and responsibility and government or other development agencies would only be a facilitator.

The informants shared that these programmes were a childhood security to them and to their parents. These programmes helped to get place for a certain period which was urgently needed in their environment and other benefits were their demand for attendance. They did not take as their change agent.

The intervention failed to bring psychological changes among these children. Thus, their behavioural status shaped according to their residential background.

We conclude that the profession of social work was in crisis due to use it as banner heading. The education and method of social work did not match with the service delivery. It reminds us that the social work profession should be renamed as social service profession or profession of relief work. The professional social work had been poorly implied. It failed to root out the problem while it was involved to nurture the problem only to gain some employment benefit. On the other hand, it promoted the corruption to the individuals who were in total process of programme framing, implementation and so forth.

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