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## **SOCIAL GROUP WORK**

### **Unit: 1**

## **Introduction and Concept**

1. Social group work is a method of social work which develops the ability of establishing constructive relationship in individuals through group activities. Group experiences are the essential needs of human being. The reciprocal and dynamic interactions and transactions between persons and environment are inherent in social group work practice. Sometimes due to his/her own fault or weakness and sometimes due to unfavourable environment, one fails to perform his/ her activities of the group life. Here group work helps the individual in removing weakness and strengthening internal power to perform his/her job satisfactorily.
2. The social group worker must have the theoretical knowledge of social group work, its principles, its skills, its models, its assumption so that he/she may be able to perform his/her jobs most satisfactorily. All these concepts have been discussed in this chapter.
3. Group work is one of the methods used predominantly in the context of the face-to-face group and which uses the group also as a medium of action. It is a unique, exciting, dynamic way to help people make changes in their lives that they themselves desire.
4. Groups are used effectively by social workers today to help people of all ages and all walks of life, enhance their social functioning and to cope more effectively with their problems. Group workers are involved in all fields of social work practice and are to be found in mental health, family counselling, child welfare, substance abuse, disability, correctional and many other settings. They are critically important to members of clinical teams attempting to respond to serious mental and emotional social problems.

### **Definitions**

Group Work maybe defined as an educational process emphasising the development and social adjustment of an individual through voluntary association and the use of this association as a means of furthering socially desirable ends.

**(Newsletter -1935)**

Social Group Work aims at the development of persons through the interplay of personalities in group situations, and at the creation of such group situations to provide for integrated, co-operative group action for common

**(Coyle 1937)**

In Indian context) Social Group Work will refer to working with a small group (members ranging from 7-10) to a medium size group (members ranging from 10-20) for a variety of purposes beginning from recreation to behaviour modification on the one hand and accomplishing tasks including social change and development on the other, with a variety of clients ranging from children to elderly. The worker makes use of the expertise in human relationships to help these groups to achieve the group goals in a participatory manner while paying adequate attention to individual needs and social norms.

**(H. Y .Siddiqui -2008)**

Social Group Work is a method of social work which helps individuals to enhance their social functioning through purposeful group experiences and to cope more effectively with their personal, group or community problems

**( Konapka -1963)**

Social Group work is a psychosocial process which is concerned no less than with developing leadership ability and cooperation than with building on the interests of the group for asocial purpose

**(Hamilton -1949)**

Group Work as a social process and a method through which group life is affected by a worker who consciously direct the interacting process toward the accomplishment of goals which are conceived in a democratic frame of reference

**( Wilson & Ryland -1949)**

Group work is method by which the group worker enables various types of groups to function in such a way that both group interaction and programme activities contribute to the growth of the individual and the achievement of desirable social goals.

(Association for the Advancement of Group Work-1948)

### **Objectives**

1. To teach the individual to live & work together and participate in the group activities for their intellectual emotion& physical growth
2. To live a good life within the group and family. The individual is also taught to work together with other people & participate in different activities.
3. To develop individual personality& behaviour by using different group work process
4. To prepare the individual to learn how to safe responsibility in a democracy style of working.
5. To give opportunity to them who have potentiality, worth and dignity of leadership
6. To make best use of leisure time

7. To learn division of labour & specialization of role just to indicate to play individual role in the group
8. To provide suitable task to the individual according to her/his skill, knowledge and interest
9. To widen ones horizon
10. To prepare people for social change
11. To apply group therapy in need of physical, mental and emotional adjustment

### **Characteristics of Group work**

1. Group work practiced by group itself
2. It is based on humanitarian philosophy
3. It gives aspiration to help each other
4. Group work provides more information and more skill.
5. It develop human personality

#### **1. Group work is practiced by group itself**

With the help of group workers, development of the individual changes and personality growth are happen. The group practiced and take steps by his own worth and dignity by the help of its workers.

#### **2. Based on humanitarian philosophy:**

Group work is based on humanitarian philosophy. A group gets its inspiration from the happiness, joy and prosperity of the member of that particular group within a community. A group must have a belongingness and group philosophy.

#### **3. It gives aspiration to help each other:**

Because of living together, sharing problem and emotion of each other they get an aspiration to help each other. The group helps the individual when she/he is in problem.

#### **4. It provides more skill and information:**

After formation of a group by a worker the group member get more information and skill. Because of belongingness and helping mind the member can share their knowledge among themselves. They get more information about science, resources and techniques.

#### **5. It develops human personality:**

After making a group their networking with other groups, workers and agency develop their personality.

### **Functions of group work**

1. Group works mainly sees the situation & the needs of all the individuals & try to solve the problems of the individuals. For every individual the group is the main source of strength & renders everybody helping hand.
2. A group fulfil the social desires and need of each individual in the group
3. Group work is carried on with voluntary group in the setting of social agency
4. Group workers take care of social agencies in many fields as education, religious & recreational field.
5. It is a helping process with dual purpose of individual & group growth.
6. The function of the group work is always for the betterment of the individual as well as for the growth of the entire group.
7. Group worker plays role of enabler & helping person, by earning an effective group. The group worker is a main person who by her/his better knowledge try to make the group better.

### **Development of Group work in India**

Group work as a method of social work came to India in 1936 along with the introduction of professional social work education, ten years after its formal acknowledgement in the West. Even though there is evidence of the group approach being used in charity, imparting religious education through oral tradition, mobilising people for the freedom struggle against the British, social reform and in welfare strategies such as the Sarvodaya and Bhoodan movement, there is very little documentation and theorisation based on it. All schools of social work in India teach a course/paper in social group work (sometimes alternatively titled as social work with groups) at the graduate and the postgraduate level.

There was an effort to develop some indigenous materials in group work by the then United Nations Social Welfare and Development Centre for Asia and the Pacific and the Association of Schools of Social Work in 1979. Compared to casework and community organisation, contributions in developing indigenous materials on group work are lagging even today. The Department of Social Work at the University of Baroda developed and published some of the first records of group work practice in 1960. The Association of Schools of Social Work jointly with the Technical Cooperative Mission (USA) laid down minimum standards for group work practice. Two social workers who have tried to trace the historical development of group work in India, V.D. Mehta (1987) and Helen Joseph (1997), agree that the theoretical perspective taught in the schools of social work in India and the practice models are primarily American as in the case of social work itself.

The practice of social group work in India is generally limited to correctional and other residential institutional setting, hospitals and so on in the urban areas. The general activities undertaken were recreational, educational and cultural in character. Group work method was also practiced in community work, as in the case of Mahila Mondals and Yuvak Mondals, but it was primarily recognised as community work. Practice of group work is also given emphasis through the fieldwork programme in some schools. Students placed in agencies and open communities work with groups of children, youth, adults and elderly who

are either 'sick' or healthy in urban and rural areas. For instance, the student of Visva Bharati placed in open communities organise groups of children and adults in the poor neighbourhood with a combined objective of socialisation, structured recreation, functional literacy, awareness generation on health and hygiene, environment and other socially relevant issues. In the recent years, groups of adolescent girls and boys are also been organised in the villages to deal with issues of life skill development including home management, reproductive and sexual health, sexuality, family planning methods etc., considering the social reality that majority of them will be getting married at an early age.

This brief review of historical trends in group work practice is intended to enable you to understand current trends in group work practice from a broad perspective. Today a remedial approach focussing on improving the functioning of individual group member continues as the preferred method of practice. This model of practice is based on problem identification, assessment, and treatment. The emphasis on mutual aid characteristics of group work also continues where the worker's role is to mediate between the needs of group members and society. Mutual aid and shared, reciprocal responsibility are appropriate in such settings such as short-stay homes and Nari Niketans that are designed to helping women in distress to live together, to support each other and to cope with stressing life events. It is also useful in community groups like Mahila Mondals, youth clubs and other community groups where reciprocal sharing of mutual concerns and the giving and receiving of support are central purposes. Professional social workers are also involved as consultants or facilitators of self - help groups that emphasise the mutual aid characteristics of a group.

## **2.5. Principles of Group work**

The group worker benefit the conscious understanding between the two. The concepts are ideas regarding between the two. The concepts are ideas regarding between the two. The concepts are ideas regarding individuals, groups and communities emerged from social and biological sciences as well as from the humanities disciplines. Such concepts are for example social distance, problem, role, ego, etc. They are basic to all social work methods. A principle is a verbalized statement, general rules or laws, fundamental truths by which we proceed from one situation to another. A principle must be understood to mean a hypothesis so adequately tested by observation and experiment that it may be put forward as a guide to action. Social group work principles are guiding assertions of statements that have come from experience and research. Basic principles of working with people in groups to help them grow and change have emerged from the practice of social group work. The objectives of social group work can be fulfilled only within the frame work of principles. Therefore, it seems necessary to deal with basic principles, which are guiding force for group work be practice.

**Douglas** has described **fourteen principles** of social group work.

- 1) Recognition and subsequent action in relation to the unique difference of each individual.
- 2) Recognition and subsequent action in relation to the wide variety of groups as groups.
- 3) Genuine acceptance of each individual with his unique strengths and weaknesses.
- 4) Establishment of a purposeful relationship between group worker and group members.
- 5) Encouragement and enabling of help and cooperative relationship between members.
- 6) Appropriate modification of the group process.
- 7) Encouragement of each member to participate according to the stage of his capacity and enabling him to become more capable.
- 8) Enabling members to involve themselves in the process of problem solving.
- 9) Enabling group members to experience increasingly satisfactory forms of working through conflicts.
- 10) Provision of opportunities for new and differing experience in relationships and accomplishments.
- 11) Judicious use of limitations related to the diagnostic assessment of each individual and total situation.
- 12) Purposeful and differential use of programme according to diagnostic evaluation of individual members group purpose and appropriate social goals.
- 13) Ongoing evaluation of individual and group progress.
- 14) Humane and disciplined use of self on the part of the group worker.

**Konopka** has described certain principles to work with the groups. Summary of these principles has been narrated here.

- 1) The social worker's goal is to enable clients or group members as a whole to move toward greater independence and capacity for help.
- 2) The social worker must use the scientific method to prepare for action fact-finding analysis and diagnosis in relation to the individual, group and the social environment.
- 3) The social worker must form purposeful relationship. It means a conscious focusing on the needs of the group members and attempts to fulfill them.
- 4) The social worker must use himself consciously. This includes self-knowledge and discipline in relationship but without the loss of warmth and spontaneity.
- 5) The social worker must accept members as they are, without condemning their behaviour. This involves deep understanding of group members as well as knowledge and identification of values regulating human beings.

6) The social worker must understand the origins of his own value system and be able to handle it in relation to the value system of others.

7) He must allow members to develop their own behaviour without much interference and to choose their own point of departure without imposing outside demands. But the worker has responsibility for stimulating change.

**Cohen** has also discussed certain principles which may be significant in working with the groups. According to him:

1) The group members must be encouraged to help themselves by the social worker playing as indirect or enabling role rather than a manipulative one. It means the group members be given the right of self-direction and self-determination.

2) The work with the group should be started at the level of group members. It means that proper knowledge of educational, economic, social and other characteristics are essential while working with the group. If the work or programmes are above the mental level of members, they will lose their interest.

3) Social worker must focus not merely on the immediate problem as seen by the group but on relation to the total situation.

4) Social worker must keep in mind that individual differences exist while dealing with the group members.

5) It should be kept in mind that the welfare of individual is inextricably interwoven with the welfare of the group. Therefore social worker must be concerned with the development of material, human and social resources to meet all the needs of all the members of the group.

**Friedlander** has mentioned the following basic principles of social group work.

1) The function of the social group worker is a helping or enabling one. This means that his goal is to help the members of the group and the group as a whole to move toward greater independence and capacity for self-help.

2) In determining his/her way of life, the group worker uses the scientific method--- fact-finding, analysis and diagnosis in relation to the individual, the group of the social environment.

3) The group work method requires the worker to form purposeful relationship to group members and the group.

4) One of the main tools in achieving such relationship is the conscious use of self.

5) A basic respect and love for people without considering his weakness.

6) The work should be started from where the group is.

7) There should be constructive use of limitations. The group worker will mainly use himself, programme



materials, interaction of the group and awaking of insight in the group members.

8) Every member of the group should be understood separately. It means individualization is essential.

9) Interaction is a process through which group members develop their strengths and power. Therefore, social group worker should properly monitor this process.

10) It is also necessary that non-verbal activities and programmes should be understood and used alongwith the verbal material.

**Trecker** has explained the following principles of social group work.

- 1) The principle of planned group formation.
- 2) The principle of specific objectives.
- 3) The principle of purposeful worker-group relationship.
- 4) The principle of continuous individualization.
- 5) The principle of guided group interaction.
- 6) The principle of democratic group self- determination.
- 7) The principle of flexible functional organisation.
- 8) The principle of progressive programme experience.
- 9) The principle of resource utilization.
- 10) The principle of evaluation.

**On the basis of different principles discussed by different social work authors, we may summarize as follows.**

- 1) Principle of planned organisation of the group.
- 2) Principle of understanding each individual as a member of a group and as an individual.
- 3) Principle of equality.
- 4) Principle of understanding relationship as tool for solving group problems as well as individual problems and also for development of the group.
- 5) Principle of encouragement of each member of the group.
- 6) Principle of recognition of variety of groups with different objectives.
- 7) Principle of self-development, i.e. full opportunity to the group to organise its programmes according to its needs.
- 8) Principle of self problem solving. Members should be involved in understating and solving problems themselves.
- 9) Principle of use of programme according to diagnosis of the group. Different types of programmes are needed according to the problems of the group.
- 10) Principle of experience development. Each member of the group should get opportunity to act and express his feelings in the group.
- 11) Principle of understanding the importance of group life in shaping and moulding one's character and personality. The group worker should believe the importance of group experience.
- 12) Principle of understanding the group process and its different elements, for example, group structure, role and status, division of responsibility, etc.
- 13) Principle of understanding familiarity with the process of cooperation, conflict, accommodation, resistance and ambivalence in the group. This knowledge is essential to handle the different group situation.
- 14) Principle of modification in-group process. The group worker always keeps in mind the result of group activities. If it is not as it is required he suggests the group members to modify their activities and programmes.
- 15) Principle of providing new opportunities. It is the job of group worker to make aware the group about the opportunities of work in different fields and also the ways and means to avail these opportunities.
- 16) Principle of use of constructive limitations. Nobody is perfect. This is also applicable to the group members. Whatever the capacity and ability they have should be used properly by

the group and whatever the limitations, they should fully understand and attempts should be made to work within these limitations.

17) Principle of conscious use of himself/herself. The role of group worker is to guide the interaction process of the group. He/She should interfere in the group activities only when group members should demand for his/her help. Members of the group should not feel that the worker is unnecessary interferes in their affairs.

18) Principle of use of scientific action plan. It means that the social group worker first find out the problem of the group or collect data and on the basis of collected facts, the diagnosis is done. After that action plan should be prepared for the solution of the problem and for the development of the group.

19) Principle of acceptance. It means that the group worker should accept the members as they are without condemning any weakness. At group level, it must accept the services of the group worker.

20) Principle of understanding values. Values are the guiding force for behaviour expression, they must be kept in mind while dealing with the group problems.

21) Principle of determination of specific objectives. Objectives should be clear for the group as well as to the group worker.

22) Principle of resource utilization. The group may have different kind of needs and these needs cannot be fulfilled by one agency and therefore the worker should tap the resources of the community.

23) Principle of evaluation, continuous examination and evaluation of group activities.

### **Types of Social Work Groups**

The social work groups can be classified on the basis of the purpose for which the group is conceptualised. The purposes may be to meet the socio-emotional needs of individual members or to accomplish a specific or a set of tasks of an individual member or group as a whole for its growth and development. Konapka (1983) classified social work groups as development groups and social action groups. Another classification is treatment and task groups as discussed by Toseland and Rivas (1984). They further divided treatment groups as remedial, educational, growth, and socialisation groups; and task groups into committees, teams, delegate councils, treatment conference and social action groups. This classification of groups into different types is not water tight, they tend to overlap. Therefore for our discussion, the various types of groups that can be formed by social group workers are classified as,

a) Remedial groups b) Growth groups c) Task groups

- a) **Remedial groups** are mostly to enable the members to sustain their changed behaviour and to cope up with new situations in life. The focus is more on the socio-emotional needs. This type of group is formed with those people who have undergone some treatment for a pathological condition. For example, a group of people who

have been discharged from a drug de-addiction centre have to be helped to continue their changed behaviour and the treatment.

- b) **Growth groups** are to create awareness about the opportunities to grow and develop in their career and other life positions. These groups focus both on the social and emotional needs of the members as well as achievement of a tangible target. Some examples are: a group of youth is brought together to enhance their entrepreneurial abilities so as to improve income generating capacities and make them feel they are worthy members of the society, teaching children to acquire social skills and social etiquettes, so that they perform their social responsibilities properly and grow as useful adults.
- c) **Task groups** focus on certain work or activity the group is to achieve for its own development. The task could be development oriented, solving a problem or a crisis situation or a social disadvantage. Some examples are: a committee formed by an organisation to deliberate on certain strategies to improve the service delivery, an administrative group of heads of different units of an agency to work out ways and means to improve the performance of the staff and bring about coordination among the different units, group formed to tackle water shortage, poor civic amenities and reservation of jobs for women. These groups are formed in residential settings, day-care service centres, community settings and even an open or general public platform as well as in formal organisations.

### **Skills of social group work**

**Trecker** has listed the following basic skills of social group work.

#### **1. Skill in Establishing Purposeful Relationship**

- a) The group worker must be skilful in gaining the acceptance of the group and in relating himself to the group on a positive professional basis.
- b) The group worker must be skilful in helping individuals in the group to accept one another and to join with the group in common pursuits.

#### **2. Skill in Analysing the Group Situation**

- a) The worker must be skilful in judging the developmental level of the group to determine what the level is, what the group needs and how quickly the group can be expected to move. This calls for skill in direct observation of groups on a basis of analysis and judgment.
- b) The group worker must be skillful in helping the group to express ideas, work out objectives, clarify immediate goals and see both its potentialities and limitations as a group.

#### **3. Skill in Participation with the Group**

- a) The group worker must be skillful in determining, interpreting, assuming and modifying his own roles with the group.

b) The group worker must be skillful in helping, group members to participate, to locate leadership among them and to take responsibility for their own activities.

#### **4. Skill in Dealing with Group Feeling**

a) The group worker must be skilful in controlling his own feelings about the group and must study each new situation with a high degree of objectivity.

b) The group worker must be skillful in helping groups to release their own feelings, both positive and negative. He must be skillful in helping groups to analyse situations as part of the working through group or intergroup conflicts.

#### **5. Skill in Programme Development**

a) The group worker must be skillful in guiding group thinking so that interests and needs will be revealed and understood.

b) The group worker must be skillful in helping groups to develop programmes, which they want as a means through which their needs may be met.

#### **6. Skill in Using Agency and Community Resources**

a) The group worker must be skillful in locating and then acquainting the group with various helpful resources which can be utilized by the members for programme purpose.

b) The group worker must be skillful in helping certain individual members to make use of specialized services by means of referral that cannot be met within the group.

#### **7. Skill in Evaluation**

a) The group worker must have skill in recording the development processes that are going on as he works with the group.

b) The group worker must be skillful in using his records and in helping the group to review its experiences as a means of improvement.