

## **In Quest for Indigenization of Social Work Education and Practice in Bangladesh: Complexities and Prospects**

Md. Fakrul Islam<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** Social work is a multi-faceted humanitarian profession which enables people to deal with complex and difficult situations of society and environment. Though professional social work has its moorings in the west, at present, evolution of its knowledge methods of practice have made a positive contribution throughout the world. But variations among countries in terms of cultures, economic positions, religions, political ideologies, geographic locations, levels of education, values and ethics, and so on always make differences in educating and inspire practicing social work in indigenous ways. More than half a century has passed since the commencement of social work education in Bangladesh. However, social work is still not a nationally recognized profession in this country. Although there is sufficient institutional base for social work education and its application in Bangladesh, it has not been able to gain professional status and recognition. The problems associated with such a situation are very subtle and deep rooted in society. Although there is a debate on the effectiveness of social work education, there is no doubt that in this century it is moving towards a positive direction. Besides various public universities, many private universities and colleges are providing social work education and various governmental and non-governmental organizations are providing training and rendering social services. This paper has discussed the conceptual and theoretical aspects and queries regarding prevailing complexities in practical education and practices of social work focusing on the efforts towards adopting indigenous means in Bangladesh.

**Keywords:** indigenization, internationalization, social work education, complexities, career prospects

### **I. Introduction**

#### **(a) Indigenizing Social Work Education and Practice: Meaning and Scope**

Indigenization is meant by the fact of making something more native and more own. It is the transformation of some services, ideas and so on to suit a local thinking, local habit, norms, ideals, beliefs and culture, especially through the use of more indigenous people in rules and guidance such as in power of administration and opportunity to employment, etc. The term indigenization was primarily used by anthropologists to describe what happens when locals

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<sup>1</sup> Professor, Department of Social Work, University of Rajshahi, Rajshahi 6205, Email: [fakrul@ru.ac.bd](mailto:fakrul@ru.ac.bd)

take something from the outside and make it their own (e.g. Africanization, Americanization, Indianization, Bangladeshi, etc.). The other meaning of indigenization is to bring (something) under the control, dominance, or influence of the people native to a specific geographical or local area.

Indigenizing can be a personal view or a social policy. The dictionary meaning can vary from one discipline to another. According to the Collins Dictionary (2017), “The infusion of indigenous ideas, values, peoples, symbols, aesthetics, procedures and an authentic history into an organization so that it is as thoroughly a product of indigenous imaginations and aspirations as it is of western or settler ones.” In other sense, indigenization can be policy or a source of local people’s demand.

Usually nature of social work evolves with the development and ongoing demand of a nation. The mandate for social work education, training and practice is to be considered by the people and determined by the government. Self expectations emerged from self awareness of the people of a nation determine their own ways. The process of indigenization occurs in this way. As social work is a profession of many faces and practice of many phases it poses some unique characteristics, which varies from nation to nation. Indigenizing social work education and practice is relatively a new concept though the use of this concept is comparatively not so new in other disciplines.

#### **(b) Internationalizing Social Work**

Internationalization is the process of increasing involvement of enterprises in international markets while there is no agreed definition of internationalization. There are several internationalization theories which try to explain why there are international activities (Gala Global, 2017). In business, internationalization means the growing tendency of corporations to operate across boundaries. Internationalization is a critical business process for any company producing multilingual products. It is important to consider the various markets a product will target and make the necessary adaptations early in product design and development (Gala Global, 2017). It is an approach to design products and services that is easily adaptable to different cultures and languages.

The rapid socio-economic changes taking place in Bangladesh are giving rise to new developments and complexities which we need to be prepared for. Social work education has to build student and faculty capacity to assess critically these processes and anticipate these challenges. Scholars of Social work view globalization as involving complex processes with both positive and negative impacts (Midgely and others 2010). There have been growing concerns and recognition on this issue throughout the globe. In this regard, many scholars have put forward that the mounting recognition of the global context of social work practice, along with increased student mobility and interest in overseas employment

opportunities, has fuelled an increasing demand for international social work practicum (Panos, 2005; Lawrence *et al.*, 2009; Cleak and Fox, 2011).

International exchange programs are now a common feature of university education and their perceived benefits suggest that students can enhance their placement experience by combining their awareness of local issues with a global awareness of diversity and inequalities (Cox and Pawar, 2006; Healy, 2008; Nuttman-Shwartz and Berger, 2011; Bell and Anscombe, 2012; Das and Anand, 2013). In the last few decades, social work students have had the opportunity to explore different cultural contexts either through study abroad programs, short-term international exchange programs or full-term fieldwork practice. The 2010 International Federation of Schools of Social Work (IFSW) global agenda has provided renewed incentives for the growth of exchange programs to enhance social work students' awareness of how global issues influence local concerns and the development of cultural competence (Nagy and Falk, 2000; Panos *et al.*, 2004; Cox and Pawar, 2006; Healy, 2008; Cleak and Fox, 2011; Bell and Anscombe, 2012; Das and Anand, 2013). Although there are debates on the fixation of exchange program on global and local issues of social work, almost all have admitted the need of local necessity.

The popular proverb, *Buli and Gali*- seems local orders and global chaos in social work. Some kinds of social or political practice do not need a high degree of cultural literacy as does social work and therefore can engage in promoting a neo-liberal fantasy of a 'global this or that'. The realities of front-line practice and the actual economic constraints on social welfare spending rather insist that we set our sights at the level of the nation-state as the basic unit of administrative responsibility for social care. It also insists that the thick stuff of social interactions is only understandable in terms of a situated self (Panos *et al.*, 2004).

Globalization along with the new economic order is raising aspirations among the youth of Bangladesh who are increasingly looking towards the West for improved professional degrees and contemporary study materials. It is not only happening in Bangladesh but also a trend in social work in Indian subcontinent especially among the post graduate students is observed. This move is encouraged by the international exchanges between the universities exchanges of students across the global borders. On the other hand, Nadkarni (2010) argued that some of the positive benefits would include the opportunity to include the western conception of social work and sensitize the youth to the needs in the South; to undertake cross-cultural studies and develop a true global core of knowledge, skills and values of professional social work.

As an initial result of globalization, international organizations have set up their organizations in Bangladesh and this process is still continuing. By their outsourcing offices, new spaces for counseling, advocacy and intervention etc. have been created. Sometimes,

the target approaches set up by foreign bosses of these organizations are very rigid and in the recent socioeconomic and political crises, this is placing tremendous pressure on the field level officers. So before adopting an indigenization process, efforts with its merits and demerits should be taken into consideration very carefully.

### **Is Social Work Education for Elitists or Capitalists?**

It is often argued that, social work is people-centered development work. It provides opportunity to deal with the problems at both national and global levels. The challenge is how social work education should position itself in Bangladesh. In the past foreign teachers taught in the presence of international students at ISWR, Dhaka University, even at the department of social work at Rajshahi University. In India, “professionalization has been said to create elitism in social work where the field is dominated by the urban middle class. According to Siddiqui (1984), the priority for offering of courses is the easily available job placements and this influences the selection of students who fit into this job, the profession of social work should be non-elitist both in the content and pedagogy as well as the social class from which the students hail (as cited in Nadkarni, 2010).

This dilemma also remains in Bangladesh in case of the students with the rising economic costs of living. For that social work graduates always try to choose an elitist job or jobs with high salaries. For example, choosing cadre services like police, customs etc. hunting jobs available at international organizations and projects. In these days of rampant corruptive practices in almost all job sectors, there seems no such service sectors or workers to check mass level of corruptions in Bangladesh. Usually, Elites do not want to fight for social problem or to eradicate them; they rather create fashions and dilemma. A real social worker is always dedicated to the betterment of humankind with his profession. With other modern psycho-social, environmental, clinical services side by side the Social worker need to be trained to work in the most vulnerable, poor and remote areas. Teachers and trainers of social work in Bangladesh should tailor their programs to the development needs of the problem-prone marginalized grassroots people along with special care of women and children following indigenous needs demands. Social work institutions imparting education and delivering services in Bangladesh are facing complexities and resource crunch. How do they address this issue of being capitalist and elitist? In this paper various aspects of social work have been critically discussed.

### **II. Objectives of the Paper**

The objective of this paper is to discuss various aspects of conceptual, theoretical queries regarding prevailing complexities in practical education and practices of social work focusing on the efforts towards adopting indigenous means in Bangladesh.

### III. Methods

This paper has been written on the basis of reviewing some related literature on the issue of indigenization of social work education and practice in Bangladesh. Both conceptual and practical grounds and contents of the topic have been discussed in a descriptive way. Secondary data and information published in both hard and online books, journals have been used.

### IV. Complexities in Bangladesh: Some Queries

Following are the queries of both former and new learners and practitioners of social work in Bangladesh.

- Debate on naming the discipline whether is it 'Social Welfare or Social Work' and is it the time to take root?
- Is Social Work only an academic discipline or recognized profession?
- Is the career prospect of social work graduates possible through universal or indigenous way of teaching and learning?
- Is licensure of social work profession and capacity building so complex?
- Who will recognize social work as a profession in Bangladesh and why?
- Is there any organization, any platform or '**Institutional Review Board**' (**IRB**) for providing administrative, legal and ethical recognitions?

Social work emerged as a profession in Bangladesh following the path shown by the technologically developed western countries. Through mechanization and industrialization enormous change has taken place in society. Consequently various types of economic and psycho-social problems came into existence. Under such circumstances social work emerged as a profession so as to solve these problems with its own philosophy, policy and methods. In the beginning more emphasis was placed on preventive measures. In more recent times different social movements and programs to bring about development and change based on specific social work methods and principles are being stressed upon targeting individuals, groups and communities.

A social worker's pursuit is to deliver professional service to fulfill social needs and solve social problems using socially acceptable means. Naturally the philosophy and social values adopted by social workers do not contradict those adopted by the society and state. The ideologies and values on the basis of which social work programs are executed in a capitalist state cannot be applied in a socialist one. Social work is considered an indispensable phenomenon in a capitalist society through which attempts are made to build a welfare state. However, in a socialist state social work is thought to be useless and redundant. While

individual freedom, self-sufficiency, self-determination, humanitarianism are stressed in capitalist countries, socialist countries emphasize group efforts to achieve collective ends, equality, justice etc. Therefore acceptability of social work in capitalist and socialist countries varies significantly.

In a donor-dependent developing country like Bangladesh exploitation and injustice occur within a mixed system of feudalism, capitalism and socialism. Here socialist type of control is observed to some extent in the economy, and 'limited-democracy' (and in some cases 'over-democracy') is practiced in the political arena. Immediately after the birth of Bangladesh through a liberation war costing 30 million lives attempts have been made to uphold the socialist ideals, especially in the economy. Its long military rule and periods of endeavors towards democracy has kept the country at a state of a developing economy. Like its inhabitants, the social system of Bangladesh is a 'mixed creation.'

Bangladesh is a home of 150 million people. A great proportion of the population is illiterate (40%) and ignorant. Domestic resources are limited and underutilized; national budget is grossly dependent on foreign aid and loans; government is weak and vulnerable. Therefore radical positive change is required in Bangladesh. However, social work neither encourages such types of sweeping changes, nor is it capable of such tasks. It is rather an exceptional applied social science which aims at capacity building through which people can live independently using available resources, overcoming the odds they face.

Professional social work began in Chicago in 1893 at the International Congress of Charity Collection and Philanthropy through the initiative of Anna L. Doyce. Social Work in Bangladesh began during the Pakistani period. The government facing multifarious social problems sought help from the United Nations in 1952. In response a group of UN representatives visited Bangladesh (the then East Pakistan). Observing the nature, types and intensity of the socio-economic problems they insisted on starting professional social work programs. Following their suggestions, a program named 'Urban Community Development Program' was initiated in Kayat Tuli, Dhaka. In order for officials to work efficiently for the project, a three month training course was introduced. The time span of the training was increased later on. National Council of Social Work was established in 1956. When social work for child welfare and medical social work was introduced need for more professional social workers was felt. As per recommendation of the National Social Work Council, Master's program in Social Work was introduced at the University of Dhaka.

Social Work is not a nationally recognized profession in Bangladesh. Although there is sufficient institutional base for social work education and its application in Bangladesh, it still has not been able to gain professional status and recognition. The problems associated

with such a situation are very subtle and deep rooted in society; hence quite difficult to identify. I point out a few of these problems as follows:

1. Social work is mainly a program designed for the developed capitalist countries. Though community development is often mentioned as a social work method in developing countries, the International Social Work Association still has not recognized it as a social work method. Thus the scope of applying social work methods in developing countries still remains very narrow. People in developing countries suffer more from problems associated with the fulfillment of their basic needs, rather than from psycho-social problems. Group and organizational structures to deal with social work problems in these countries have not flourished either. So, it is difficult to apply social work techniques and to develop social work as a profession in countries like Bangladesh.

2. Attempts to apply social work methods used in the US directly in the social milieu of Bangladesh raises two problems—(a) Bangladesh society is not compatible to adopt these techniques, leading to very low effectiveness of these methods; hence it fails to attract sufficient public interest. (b) The traditional services and reform oriented programs have become less important in the face of the emergence of social work methods. Such a situation opened the doors to NGOs activities.

3. There is practically no social work association in Bangladesh. As a result there is no one to speak for social work as a profession. The problems that have arisen owing to this deficiency are the following:

- No united efforts can be made;
- The ethical standards and values of social work practice in Bangladesh cannot be identified;
- Awareness of the social problems in Bangladesh cannot be built and the necessity of professional social work is not being felt.

4. The leadership necessary to promote social work as a profession in Bangladesh is not visible. The learned teachers/professors of social work still have not been able to direct social work into a dynamic path which would be suitable for Bangladeshi society.

5. Social work is a developing social science that requires continuous upgrading of scientific knowledge and technology. There is significant dearth of practical guidelines based on acquired and integrated modern scientific knowledge suitable to be applied in social work practices in Bangladesh.

6. There is no scope of practicing social work privately in Bangladesh through getting a trade license. Such work is not recognized by the state. People trained in social work are

bound to work within an institutional and organizational framework to deliver their services, which have limited social work practices.

7. The social work trainings delivered in Bangladesh are ‘generic’ in nature. However, modern social work training requires ‘apprenticeship’ type of training. Those who acquire social work training may end up in jobs not related with social work, and those employed in social work services are not well trained in social work. Thus a gap is created in acquired knowledge and its application. This is a great problem for social work as a profession in Bangladesh.

Thus we find that the problems of social work as a profession are multifaceted and complex. There is lack of strategic guidelines to utilize expertise of the people trained in social work; the government is reluctant to recognize social work as a profession and hence does not patronize it. Under the circumstances it is necessary for social work experts to get together in order to identify the needful to be done in order to sketch an institutional framework for social work practice. These experts must find out ways to convince the government to recognize social work as a profession and patronize it. Those who have received higher education in social work and are currently in political/administrative posts will have to come forward and take actions for the same. Appropriate theoretical framework and targets must be set to take into account indigenous social work strategies and approaches.

#### **V. Issues Encountered by Social Workers and Internees in Training**

Field work in social work education in Bangladesh is neither foundation-course training nor an in-service training. There is no code of ethics and uniform guidelines in the educational institutions and among the NGOs working in various socio-economic development organizations. Other problems are as follows:

- (a) Lack of institutions for field training;
- (b) Limited working environment and city based fields;
- (b) Lack of transportation;
- (C) Lack of supervisor or qualified guides;
- (d) Traditional mentality of supervisors;
- (d) Funds constraints of the institutions, etc.

#### **VI. Prospects of Social Work Education in Bangladesh**

##### **College Education**

*At Higher Secondary Level (in Colleges):* Social work is being taught in various Government and non-government colleges for the last 35 years at Higher Secondary School (HSC) level. Students can choose social work as an optional subject. There is no practical



training (field work) at HSC level. At present social work is taught in 320 colleges among them 70 colleges are government and 250 colleges are non-government. Before 2005, the subject was called 'social welfare'; later on, it was changed to 'social work'. As an optional subject social work is being taught in 93 colleges of Dhaka division, 32 colleges in Chittagong Division, 35 colleges in Khulna division, and in 22 colleges of Rajshahi division (Ministry of Education, 2014).

***At Bachelor of Social Science (BSS) (Honors) and BSS (Pass) Level (in Colleges):*** The National University of Bangladesh was established in 1992. Since 1992, the affiliated colleges under the National University continue to offer Bachelor of Arts (Pass) (BA Pass), Bachelor of Social Science (BSS Hons.) and Master of Social Science (MSS) course in social work. According to the data of 2016, BSS (Hons.) in social work was offered in 121 colleges and MSS in social work was offered in 71 colleges. To achieve BSS Honors Degree in social work students must go through examination worth 2,200 marks in theory and 100 marks in practical (field work of 60 working days). For MSS degree in social work students must appear in theoretical examinations worth 600 marks and practical examination worth 100 marks (including field work of 60 working days). In between 2000 and 2006, 350 lecturers in Social Work have been appointed through Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) cadre in the Government colleges. At college level the demand for higher education in social work is increasing day by day.

There are problems of practical training in the colleges due to insufficient placements at the district level. Lecturers do not want to perform field duties in the rural areas and sometimes the brilliant teachers resign their jobs and join other jobs due to the small salary in teaching. They have a very little scope of doing research and higher degrees as teachers in the colleges.

#### **University Education: Public and Private**

There are now 3 programs for professional Social Work education in Bangladesh. Since 1958, the Institute of Social Welfare and Research (ISWR) at Dhaka University runs a two-year Masters degree in Social Welfare and a three-year Bachelor's (Hons) degree. In between 1953 and 1963 the College of Social Work under Rajshahi University also ran a three-year Bachelor's Honors degree in Social Work. The training programs include in their curriculum intellectual training to develop skills and special competence, with application of theoretical knowledge in practical situations through fieldwork. "Courses such as 'scientific principles of human behavior in practical situations' and the 'structure of organization of social institutions' are taught to equip social workers with the needed knowledge base so that they can work under specific social, economic and emotional conditions" (Taher and Rahman, 1993).

In 1972, the College of Social Work was transformed into the Department of Social Work within the University of Rajshahi. In 1967 only Master of Social Science in Social Work was started in Rajshahi University. Under University of Rajshahi a three-year (Honors) program in social work started in 1964 and it continued up to 1999. Since 2000 four-year bachelor's (Hones.) program in social work was introduced. At University of Dhaka a two-year evening Master's program in Social Welfare started in 2005. In Rajshahi University a two-year evening Master program (EMSS) in Social Work has already been started since 2014. To elevate the quality of social work education, professional standard and training, compulsory courses like Basic English, Computer Operation, Practical Research etc. have been introduced. Under the Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, Sylhet, three-year Bachelor's (Honors) program in social work and Master of Social Science (MSS) program in social work started in the years 1993 and 1996 respectively. Under Jagannath University, three-year Bachelor's (Honors) program in social work and one-year MSS program in social work started in 2005.

#### **Evening Master's in Social Science (EMSS) at University Level**

At University of Dhaka a two-year evening Master's program in Social Welfare started in 2005. In Rajshahi University a two-year Evening Master in Social Work was started in 2014 and one year EMSS course in 2015. To elevate the quality of social work education, professional standard and training, compulsory courses like Basic English, Computer Operation, Practical Research etc. have been introduced.

#### **Training Provided by GOs and NGOs in the Field Level and the Local Reality**

Trainings on social services are being provided by various Go's and NGOs in Bangladesh. Training courses on office management, job evaluation, field survey and inspection, case study, service rendering, microcredit, income generation of clients, corrections, nursing, palliative care, health and hygiene, awareness building, etc. are being provided by the authorities of NAEM, BRAC, ASA, Gramen Bank, Gonoshahtho, NIPPORT, Ministry of Youth, Health, Women affaires, Social Welfare (RSS, USS), etc., though the methods, strategies and ethics of social work profession is always neglected. Sometimes both trainees and trainers are engaged in such training programs are out of social work discipline. The training is very crucial but reality of rendering training on professional social work and service is expected to be very funny.

#### **VII. Prospects in Social Work Teaching Curricula in Bangladesh**

According to syllabus of various universities, at present, the students of Social Work are studying the following courses at undergraduate and graduate levels:

*At BSS (Hons) level:* Philosophy of Social Work, History of Social Welfare and Social Work, Human Growth and Physiological Systems Human Behaviour and Mental Health,

Culture and Social Environment, Principles of Economics and Development, Social Thought and Political System, Concepts and Theories of Social Work, International Social Work, Human Rights and Social Welfare, Social Problems and Techniques of Problem Analysis, Social Welfare Services in Bangladesh, Comprehensive, Field Work, Social Welfare Administration, Project Planning and Project Management, Introduction to Social Research, Introduction to Social Statistics, Fundamentals of Computer Applications, Social Action and Voluntary Social Work, Disaster Management and Rehabilitation, Gender Issues and Social Work, Practical Research, Life and Society of Bangladesh, Social Case Work, Social Group Work, Community Organization, Community Development, Social Policy Model, Planning and Welfare Functions, Social Development and Social Work, Social Reform and Legislation.

*At MSS level:* Theory and Practice of Social Welfare Administration, Supervision & Personnel and Financial Management, Planning, Development and Social Work, Methods of Social Research, Statistical Methods, Social Work with Community: Rural and Urban Settings, Urban Community Planning, and Development, Demographic Process and Population Theories, Crime and Society, Industrial Relations, Social and Environmental Policy Model, Rural Development: Past Efforts and Contemporary Trends, Population Problems and Population Control Programs in Bangladesh, Medical Social Work, Psychiatric Social Work, Correctional Services, Family and Child Welfare, Youth Welfare, Women's Welfare Women's Emancipation, Labor Welfare, Gerontology and Geriatric Welfare, Welfare for the Disabled.

### **Progress in Teaching Materials, Researches and International Exposures**

There was a research on the indigenization of social work in Asia. The study was aimed to collect actual cases of indigenization from each participating countries social work education history including data on teaching materials and curricula. The major indicators were taken into account to measure it as number of indigenous textbooks, curricula and practice of social work, etc. Teaching materials in all participant countries were written either in English or in their local languages. For curricula, some opined to focus on understanding and utilizing problem solving and capacity building skills based on strength oriented models, some opted for 'social work camping' and some opined to adopt Dutch and USA model. Others opined to include unique causes and spiritual dimensions (meditation) and Islamic philanthropy, etc. For practice, experts opined that, "practitioners of social work in Asia are constantly in conflict with their own cultural background and the western ideas acquired during their studies" (Kana Matsou, 2013).

The Matsou report revealed that, in 2013 a plan was adopted by Akimoto funded by Mizuho Foundation under the heading of 'Internationalization of Social Work Education in Asia'. Two research teams had worked on it during Sept. 25 2013- January 25, 2014. They made

an order of participant countries. The committee reviewed some key elements on the given historical backgrounds (texts, curricula, practice). The joint research project deemed India, the Philippines and Thailand to be the pioneers of Asian social work education. In fact the committee identifies India, Philippines as English speaking countries. It is the irony of social work in Bangladesh that we neglect English as the medium of instruction in imparting social work education. However, regarding of indigenization of textbooks Bangladesh has made a progress. The table below shows a chart of indigenous textbooks in Bangladesh which has been cited in the American Council for School Social Work (ACSSW, 2013) report:

**Table 1: List of Indigenized Social Work Text Books in Bangladesh**

<b>Name of Author</b>	<b>Title of the Book</b>	<b>Place and Publisher</b>	<b>Year of Publication</b>
Ahmad, Mohiuddin	Bottom Up: NGO Sector in Bangladesh	Dhaka: CDL	1999
Ahmed, S.	Urban Community Development in Bangladesh	Dhaka: Department of Social Welfare, GoB	n.d.
Akbar, M.A.	Bangladesher Jonosankha ebong Parivar Parikalpona ( Poulation Problems of Bangladesh and Family Planning	Dhaka: ISWR, University of Dhaka	1989
Alamgir, M.K.	Development strategies for Bangladesh	Dhaka: University of Dhaka	1980
Begum, Nazmir Nur	Samajik Gobeshana Porichiti (Introduction to Social Research)	Dhaka: Knowledge View	1988
Government of Bangladesh	Activities of the Department of Social Service at a Glance	Dhaka: Department of Social Service[DSS]	2008
Hussain, M. and Alauddin, M.	Introduction to Social Work Methods	Dacca: College of Social Welfare and Research Centre[ CSWRC]	1970
Islam, Md. Fakrul	Bangladeshe Samajkarmo: Siksha, Anushilon O Proyog Kaushol (Social Work in Bangladesh: Education, Practice and Application Strategies)	Dhaka: Gotidhara	2005
Karim, Nazmul	Changing Society in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh	Dacca: Ideal Publications	1961
Momen, M.A.	Field Work Manual	Dacca: CSWRC	1970
Rahman, M. Habibur	Social Development and Social Work	Dhaka: Gotidhara	2001
Sadeque, Mohammad	Bangladesher Samasthi Unnayan (Community Development in	Dacca: Bangla Academy	1976 (Reprinted

	Bangladesh)		in 2004)
Sadeque, Mohammad and Abdul, Halim	Bangladesher Samasthi Unnayan O Palli Punorgathon (Community Development and Rural Reconstruction in Bangladesh	Dacca: Bangla Academy	1976 (Reprinted in 2004)
Samad, Mohammad	Grameen Daridro Bimochone NGOs der Bhumika (The Role of NGOs in Alleviating Rural Poverty)	Dhaka: Agami Prokashoni	1994
Sarkar, Abdul Hakim	Byakti Samajkarmo: Paddhati O Prokria (Social Case Work: Method and Process)	Dhaka: Ema Prokashoni	1994
Sarkar, Abul Hakim	Aporadh Biggan: Totto O Bishleshan (Criminology: Theory and Analysis)	Dhaka: Kollol Prokashoni	2005
Taher, M. Abu	Samajik Gobeshana Porichiti (Introduction to Social Research)	Dhaka: Anu Prokashoni	2008

Source: <https://idl-bnc-idrc.dspacedirect.org/bitstream/handle/10625/33903/120056.pdf?...1>

This is noteworthy that while Bangladesh has made a progress regarding the textbooks, the number of text books on social work is very handful. As such, the teachers and writers should write and publish more indigenous textbooks on social work.

### **Use of Modern Equipment in Teaching Methods**

In class rooms and out of class rooms there are various uses of Power Point, E-mail, Skype discussions, E-Books, E-Journals and social media counseling, etc. in all the public and private universities. Besides, there are indigenized social work values and ethics, theoretical knowledge base and indigenization in field work practice prevalent in Bangladesh.

### **VIII. Trends of Social Work Practice in Bangladesh: Various Governmental and Non-Governmental Efforts**

Since social work as a profession is not recognized by the Government in Bangladesh, the service efforts by both government and non-government organizations never get inspired. The following programs are being implemented in the social welfare sector in Bangladesh:

- (a) Women welfare Program, Ministry of Women & Children's Affair (MoWCA) National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS, 2014)
- (b) Child welfare program, Ministry of Women & Children's Affair (MoWCA) (NSPS 2015)
- (c) Youth welfare program (NSPS, 2015)

- (d) Health and family planning program National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS 2014)
- (e) Labor welfare program (NSPS, 2015)
- (f) Old age allowance for the aged and the infirm (NSPS, 2014)
- (g) Rehabilitation program and credit function for disaster mitigation (NSPS, 2015)
- (h) Social security program & Social safety net (in the national budget of 2013-2014) (NSPS, 2015)

According to the Seventh Five Year Plan (2016-2020) the following are some of the social welfare measures undertaken in Bangladesh:

***(a) Women welfare program***

The men and women ratio of Bangladesh is 51:49. The government is trying hard to integrate the womenfolk of the country into the mainstream of the development process which is one of the main strategies for overall socio-economic development. It can be quoted here that, "Poverty, malnutrition, hunger, illiteracy, etc. are largely concentrated around womenfolk, and as such women can act as uniquely suitable agents for elimination of these socio-economic maladies. Attainment of reasonable growth rate, alleviation of poverty through generation of production employment opportunities and increased self-reliance are inextricably linked with increased participation of women in development efforts. The Department of Women's Affairs with a countrywide network and *Jatiya Mohila Sangstha* - an organization with branches all over the country promotes women's rights, interests and socio-economic opportunities. Appropriate laws have been framed, especially during the nineties, to stop repression and discrimination against women. The government reconstituted the National Women's Development Council in January, 1997, to provide overall guidance on women's development issues. The National Women's Development Policy announced by the present government aims at improving the lot of the neglected womenfolk of the country, ensure equality of men and women in all spheres of national life including state, society, family, politics, administrative and economic arena, ensure security and empowerment of women, groom up women as educated and efficient human resource, eliminate discriminations and repression on women and girl-child, establish human rights of women, alleviate their poverty and above all ensure their participation in the development process. Appropriate strategies have been devised to realize these goals (www.cyberbangladesh, 2009).

***(b) Child welfare program***

Children are the future of a nation. Child welfare has been given topmost priority in the country. The Seventh Five Year Plan (2016-2020) revealed that children's welfare has also been a priority of the government. Bangladesh was one of the first signatories to the UN charter on children's rights. Vigorous efforts are being undertaken by the government at

national, regional and International levels to promote health, nutrition, education and socio-cultural interests of children Bangladesh Shishu (Children's) Academy with a countrywide network is engaged in 50cm-cultural programs for children. A 25-member National Children's Council has been reconstituted by the government for children's development and protection of children's rights. A national action plan is also being drawn up for children's development.

***(c) Youth welfare program***

Youth constitute 36% of the total civilian labor force. They are potentially the most productive force in Bangladesh. Recognizing the fact that a disciplined and, organized, trained and educated youth community can make significant contribution to the development process, the government has taken up various programs for their socio- economic uplift. Most youth are unemployed even the (40%) educated youth are jobless. The Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Department of Youth Development are entrusted with the responsibility of providing unified direction and coordination to the youth development process (Seventh Five Year Plan 2016-2020). It can be mentioned that the main objective of the youth development program is to organize and mobilize the youth community for enabling them to participate effectively in national development. Some of the specific objectives are as follows increase the participation of females in youth development, alleviate poverty through increased self-employment opportunities among the youth community, equip the youths with working skill and suitable training in technical, vocational and professional fields and organize youth groups and motivate them to assist in community development through voluntary youth organizations. The major programs of the government for youth development include: - rural youth development, skill development training, self-employment program and community development program. The youth development program is now being expanded through increased training and credit facilities (www.cyberbangladesh 2009).

***(d) Heath and family planning program***

'Health for all by -2015' is a slogan of the health ministry of Bangladesh and it is a target of millennium development. During 1998-2003 the government adopted a program named 'Health and Population Sector Program' (HPSP) to help the women, children and poor people specially living in the rural areas. It was a service package and the services under this package were as follows:

- Family planning and reproductive health care;
- To control epidemic disease;
- Curative health care service for curable diseases;

- Preventive health care service for HIV/AIDS, and six dreadful diseases (Tuberculosis, Missals, Diphtheria, Hoping Cough, Polio and Tetanus).
- To make people aware of health and personal hygiene, etc.

***(e) Labor welfare program***

The government of Bangladesh has undertaken various measures to expand the opportunities for domestic and overseas employment since 1990. It can be quoted that, “Remittances from Bangladeshis working abroad have marked a steep rise during the nineties due to a massive outflow of workers from Bangladesh. As an export item, manpower exports currently occupy the second position with an annual inflow of over 1 billion U.S. Dollars. Besides the Middle East countries, Malaysia, South Korea and Japan are the principal destinations for the Bangladeshi workers (www.discoverybangladesh.2014).

The Labor Policy of the present Government embodies creation of an environment conducive to improved Labor-Management relations in order to provide higher wages through higher productivity, Tripartism, productivity, provision of incentives, Labor welfare, employment generation, earnings according to work, and a healthy growth of trade Unionism have been emphasized for ensuring basic needs of all and a balanced economic growth (www.cyberbangladesh, 2009). Besides this, “Vocational training institutes across the country produce skilled manpower both for domestic and overseas employment. Because of rapid population growth, human resource development and generation of employment opportunities have been attached topmost priority by the government” (Seventh Five Year Plan (2016-2020).

***(f) Old age allowance for the aged and the infirm***

Bangladesh, like other developing countries, has experienced an increase in the elderly population. The proportion of older people in Bangladesh has been rising more rapidly than other groups. The declining mortality among infants and children and the increasing life expectancy and longevity in Bangladesh are changing the structure of the population. The percentage of elderly population, i.e., over 60 years of age, has increased in Bangladesh and this trend is expected to continue. The most prominent, wide spread, popular financial support program by government is old age allowance and it is a state duty. Right to have security at old age by state is recognized in the constitution of Bangladesh. The fifth five year plan has emphasized institutional development at local level for implementation of ‘pro-poor’ project. This plan assesses needs in different levels of life and the support required.

The Old Age Allowance program was started in 1998 under which each aged person received Taka 165 per month. In 2009, it was increased up to Taka 200 per month and in 2014 it was Taka 300 and in 2016 the mount was Taka 500 per month. A person is eligible



for old age allowance, who is at 57 or has exceeded this age, who has a maximum income of 3,000 Tk. (US\$ 1=78 Taka) per year and disabled persons get preference.

***(g) Rehabilitation program and credit function for disaster mitigation***

Every year Bangladesh faces severe natural calamities. Cyclone, flood, land erosion etc. cause a huge loss of wealth and lives. The government takes efforts to provide a rehabilitation program and offer credit function for mitigation of such disastrous situations.

***(h) Social security program & Social safety net***

As per the national budget of 2013-2014 (NSPS, 2015), the social service and security program of the government can be divided as following. These are running by the *Department of Social Welfare*:

- Rural Social Service (RSS)
- Urban Social Service (USS)
- Hospital social work
- Probation and after care services
- Social safety net, etc.

***Rural Social Service (RSS)***

Bangladesh is a country with an agriculture-based economy, where more than 70% of the citizens reside in rural areas. In Bangladesh, more than 50% of the country's GDP comes from the rural sector. Development of this sector is thus crucial for national development. According to the Fifth Five Year Plan (1997-2002), “The Rural Development and Cooperatives Division of the Government are responsible for planning implementation, monitoring and evaluation of rural development programs. Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB), the Department of Cooperatives and the Academies for Rural Development at Comilla and Bogra play important roles in environmental efforts for rural development. Major functions of the rural development agencies include employment and income generation, provision of credit and institutional support to rural target groups, vulnerable group development, formation of rural cooperatives, provision of health care, sanitation, safe drinking water, education etc. The RSS program was started in 1974. At present the RSS program is being implemented at 461 upozillas (local administrative units or police stations) of Bangladesh. Alongside the public sector, the NGOs also play a key-role in rural development efforts. Organizations like the Grameen Bank and BRAC have emerged as role-models in the field, especially in disbursing micro-credit.”

***Urban Social Service (USS)***

At present this program is being implemented in 50 cities of Bangladesh under revenue budget. It works in the slum area of big cities. It takes health care, sanitation, safe drinking water, education etc. for the poor slum dwellers.

### **Hospital social work**

It was started in 1959 during the Pakistani period. At present this program is being implemented in 84 hospitals of 64 districts of Bangladesh. The poor patients get some support for medicine, blood, artificial organs, spectacles, crutch and monetary help through this program. But this is a very insufficient service due to huge number of poor patients. There is also severe lack of trained hospital social workers.

### **Probation and after care services**

This program was started in 1959. Under this program in 1997-98 fiscal year a total of 572 prisoners were freed and 970 were benefited. At present this program is being implemented at 22 jails of 22 greater districts of Bangladesh.

### **Social security and social safety net**

Friedlander W.A (1975) said social security is “A job when you can earn and an income when you cannot.” Keeping this idea in mind, the social safety net program was initiated. In the constitution of Bangladesh (15<sup>th</sup> amendment 2011, article (15)) has approved the social safety net program. The World Bank says that Bangladesh’s safety net programs have shown to be effective at reducing poverty and improving gender outcomes. The Bangladesh Safety Net System for the Poorest Project (SNSP) aims to improve the equity, efficiency and transparency of five of the largest social safety net programs to benefit the poorest households.<sup>2</sup> The five safety net programs the project will support include the ‘Employment Generation Program for the Poorest (EGPP), Food for Works (FFW), Test Relief (TR), Gratuitous Relief (GR) and Vulnerable Group Feeding Programs (VGFP).<sup>3</sup>

Social Safety Net Programs (Budget 2013-14, 2014-15 (Revised) & Budget 2015-16)

(A.) Cash Transfer (Allowances) Programs & Other Activities:

*A.1 Social Protection; A.2 Social Empowerment*

(B) Food Security Programs: Social Protection

(C) Micro-Credit Programs: Social Empowerment

(D) Development Sector Programs: Social Empowerment

*D. 2 New Development Projects*

Besides these:

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<sup>2</sup> World Bank (2014), Available at [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org)

<sup>3</sup> See, [www.google.com.bd/social+safety+net+Bangladesh+2014](http://www.google.com.bd/social+safety+net+Bangladesh+2014)

- Social insurance
- Social assistance
- Assistance for hardcore poor
- Health support for vulnerable group especially for the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR), and
- Development of Bangladesh poverty database, etc.

In 2012-13 fiscal years the amount of Taka 17,814 core was allotted (10.89% of the total budget) but in 2013-2014 it was Taka 16,914 core (8.83% of the total budget) only. This means that Taka 434.58 core has been decreased in the next budget! The problems are identified as there is no social service unit, no warranty insurance for development works, overlapping of loans disbursement and lack of accountability. At present most of the personnel appointed for the programs mentioned above come from non-social work educational background. Even after being appointed they do not receive proper training. Therefore, the service delivered by these personnel is not satisfactory. If the government recognizes social work as a distinct profession and appoints personnel professionally educated and trained in social work, practice of social work will proliferate and services rendered will also be of better quality.

#### **IX. Career Prospects of Social Work Graduates**

The main objective of social work education is not only to produce social workers but also to increase the effort and productivity of people through strengthening their working capability and innovating new processes of living (Islam, 2005). This is applicable for the people working in all sectors in Bangladesh. Professional service through social work should be given priority.

To face innumerable socio-economic and environmental problems of Bangladesh –there is no alternative other than professional social work. A number of socio-economic developmental programs are being implemented by many Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) throughout the country. Despite this welfare laden endeavor in operation, professional social work is seen nowhere. Social work makes service plans in accordance with man's felt needs. In a country like Bangladesh, the purpose of social work is to fulfill the demands of the needy people and to help the families distressed with economic need in such a way that they are able to carrying out their social duties after meeting basic needs.

Professional social work can play a vital role in addressing all sorts of social problems and ensuring welfare for all in society. In Bangladesh the main target of social work should be to ensure welfare of the poor and distressed people and for this there is a concept of

community development as an important part of the basic methods of social work. In the modern world, community development method has been treated as the best for ensuring human welfare though some people do not admit it as a basic method of social work. At present, professional social work works together with other professions. In developed countries it is attached to other state programs. In Japan there is no separate organization for professional social work. In schools or in hospitals, every teacher or doctor knows how to behave with their clients. It seems that initially they perform their duties like a social worker and then a service provider. It indicates that everyone act as professional social workers in their respective offices. It is also true for other developed countries. Since there is no problem of meeting the basic human needs in the developed world, the field of community development in these countries is quite different from the field of poor countries of the third world.

Corruptions and political unrest impede development programs in Bangladesh and as a result development programs cannot be implemented properly. People of all classes (from top to bottom) are engaged in illegal activities and it is exceeding the tolerable limit. Socio-economic instability and lack of trust is seen. So, it is necessary to bring out a rapid positive social change to tackle this unstable situation. Though radical social change is not supported by the principles of social work planned social change should be encouraged widely and community development should get priority. As Biddle and Biddle (1966) commented “community development is a process by which human beings can become more competent to live with and gain some control over local aspects of frustrating and changing world.” The necessity and prospect of applying this method is of great importance as the diversity and depth of the social problem are centered upon people’s varieties.

In Bangladesh, people who help others are called social workers because of their misconception about social work. They do not know the difference between professional social work and traditional charity. It is not relevant to consider social work as a charity or Western personal service for special groups in Bangladesh. The nature and process of social work is determined by the socio-economic context of a country. The nature of social work which was introduced in 1950, with the passage of time those values are not similar with the modern concept of social work. So, there are a lot of possibilities to take up proper initiatives relevant with the demand of present situation.

Bangladesh is still a poverty stricken country. It is a highly stratified society. It consists of various types of social classes. There are so many cars and so many beggars on the streets of Bangladesh. No one seems to be happy in his/her position. The dissatisfied mentality helps to create mass corruption. For example, a government officer or dishonest businessman becomes rich by taking bribes or adulterating food items. As they are committed to achieve personal gain, they cannot make any sacrifice for the welfare of the general or poor people.

If these types of people get responsibility to implement development projects for the poor people, the poor will be poorer undoubtedly. However, there are a huge number of people who are victims of malnutrition and illness. Medical social work should be introduced widely for them. Sufficient medical care should be available in every ward or village with the appointment of trained medical social workers.

In Bangladesh peasants are engaged in agricultural activities with only per capita 0.38 acres of land. Agriculture is the main source of GDP and life of the country. But the proportion of landless people is 68.8% (Uddin, 2002). Every year river erosion makes a huge number of the populations landless and houseless. Due to river erosion and polarization of land the numbers of the floating population is increasing and they are getting poorer. This leads them to migrate to the big urban centers and makes urban poverty of Bangladesh severe. Besides, there is lack of appropriate political philosophy and commitment to eradicate poverty. In most cases, poverty reduction activities are taken on a 'pilot' or experimental basis. No expert is invited to formulate the program. Even experts or professors from the public universities usually are seldom invited. No scientific social survey is conducted. Inexperienced personnel are sent to the field over night for implementing projects and it causes great loss to the projects.

There is a lack of a holistic approach and people's participation in social development programs in Bangladesh. There is also a lack of skills, sincerity and professional values towards proper human service in implementing these programs. For a successful implementation of community development program, knowledge of social work and the presence of professional workers are badly needed. Rapid urbanization and modernization process is changing the social structure of Bangladesh. Mechanical and artificial complexities are part and parcel of urbanization. Though it is late and on a small scale, there is foreign trade and investment in Bangladesh. It has quickened the growth of urbanization. Various socio-economic and environmental problems have increased with the growth of urbanization. To address and face these problems various integrated and participatory approaches have been adopted.

There is wide scope of applying social work strategies in industrial welfare sector in Bangladesh. Beside this, there are hospitals, schools, day care centers, drug recovery centers, disorganized families, slums, individual problems, floating people's problems, delinquent correctional institutions, mental hospitals, old age homes etc. that needs the service of social workers. In an organized way, employment opportunities can be created for the professional social workers in these institutions. Employment opportunities should be preserved for trained social workers to provide appropriate service. For this, social workers also should come forward. Thus the unexpected situations relating to various complex socio-economic and environmental problems can be easily mitigated by them. If the graduates of

social work can be employed in these fields the situation can be changed in a planned way. Teachers, and students in this regard can create a social movement and a new social action plan can be adopted. The political actions of the country should be turned into a social movement for development. Political leaders can easily play a vital role by helping social workers through a social movement. Primarily, they can initiate social movement and later on it can be changed into social action through organizing unemployed educated people by a social network. Recognition of the government for social work as a profession can gain ground by bringing about socio-economic development in Bangladesh.

### **X. What to do Right Now?**

The following can be the demand for ensuring possible remedies from the corners both former and new learners and practitioners of social work in Bangladesh:

- Licensure demand- governmental recognition and license for practicing social work like other professions ;
- Job placement demand-there should be specific opportunity for social work graduates in the social service related job market (e.g., in rural development, medical social work, family, women, youth & child welfare, psychiatric social work, correctional services, labor welfare, gerontology and geriatric welfare, welfare for the disabled, police, *dudok*, education and training for development workers etc.);
- Avoid apathy;
- Create a common parlance of indigenous way of teaching and learning;
- Grow sincerity and love to own discipline; and
- Urge the elders and make the new comers aware.

There is lack of an active organization and strong leadership in the country right now. The Social Work Teachers Association (SWTA) and the Bangladesh Council for Social Work (BCSW) jointly can hold workshops, seminars and conferences so that a fruitful policy proposal can be formulated and the commitment to the discipline can ensure our demand for a legal license of practice as practitioner which can lead us towards the 'positive social change' in the country soon.

### **XI. Conclusion**

With the passage of time, social work as a dynamic branch of social sciences has gradually developed into a scientific body of knowledge. There are some principles and theories that are borrowed mostly from social and behavioral sciences. These are known as the theory of practice. On the other hand, another set of theories have developed on the basis of 'learning by doing'. These theories are known as practice theory. In countries like Bangladesh,

application of theory of practice is limited due to various socio-economic and environmental obstacles. However, practice theory is developing in Bangladesh in an indigenous way. Under various pressing circumstances, Bangladesh will have to develop and practice new dimensions and strategies to fulfill her typical needs. In this context, social work research should be carried out more rigorously to identify the felt needs of the people. The significant point that has been clearly focused in this paper is that, social work as a profession has been facing many challenges which have made debates among its service providers and service users. That should be taken into account rapidly and solved soon. Bangladesh, being exposed to the intervention of social welfare ministry, attached departments for women, youth, child welfare, privilege of higher education in social work in public and private universities, thousands of NGOs and UN organizations, along with her indigenous resources and strategies is moving towards a positive social change. Recognition of the government for social work as a profession can gain ground by bringing about a very positive socio-economic change and development in the near future.

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