THE ROLE OF SOCIAL WORK EDUCATOR IN IMPROVING THE QUALITY EDUCATION IN INDIA

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Abstract
The role of education in facilitating social and economic progress is well accepted. Access to education is critical to access emerging opportunities that accompany economic growth. Keeping in view of this accepted fact, there has been a major thrust on education since independence; but as far as ensuring quality education in rural India is concerned, it has always been one of the biggest challenges for the government. Education plays an important role in human development. Human development encompasses development in several dimensions of human well being. The quality of education depends upon many factors such as quality of curriculum, institutional structure, competence of students, competence of the teachers recruited and promoted, their roles and responsibilities and the skill and type of knowledge component developed and applied in the teaching-learning processes. For any professional branch of education dealing with the needs of the society, it is imperative to incorporate the societal needs in its curriculum. This requirement is vital for the social work profession, which directly deals with the human issues. Besides this, as a dynamic profession, the social work education has to keep pace with the changing social conditions by updating its knowledge base contextually to make it indigenous. In the schools, the role of social worker is one of individualizing, bringing services to bear on problems, coordinating these services to get the best results, intervening directly for counseling and group treatment and addressing the elements of the system that produce the problem or contribute to it. With this background, this research article covers the role of social work educator in improving the quality of education keep in view of the issues and challenges at school education level in India.

1.0 Introduction
In India, educational concepts have always conformed to the ideals, philosophy and objectives that the people set before them from time to time. The ideals and objectives were at one time influenced by the Vedas, the Upanishadas, the Puranas and the orthodox Indian Philosophy. The main tenets of Indian Philosophy are liberation from the bondage of evil which is a denial of good. According to the Upanishadas, education is that whose end-product is salvation. Vedic education on the other hand emphasises the evolution of human personality by making him self-reliant and selfless. According to Aurobindo, "education is that which helps the growing soul to draw out that in itself which is best and makes it perfect for a noble use". To Tagore "Education means enabling the mind to find out that ultimate truth which emancipates us from the bondage of the dust...". About education, Mahatma Gandhi says, "By education, I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man body, mind and spirit". All these definitions indicate that child's in born power and faculties need to be given adequate scope to grow and flourish. They favour natural growth of the child but at the same time they emphasize that proper guidance should be available to him when he/she needs it.

National development of any country depends upon the quality of education. It is one of the important factors which influence national thinking and character-building. Education reflects societal concerns, evolves social ethos and helps in generation of wealth through human resource development. Education has always been accorded an honored place in Indian society. Many educationists and thinker have stressed the fundamental role of education and its unique significance for development of the society. It performs both conservative and creative roles in society. On the one hand, it preserves significant socio-cultural ideals and value of the society which contribute to its development and on the other hand, it acts as an instrument of social change for modernization and advancement of the society. Various Commissions and Committees have reviewed the achievements and attempted to develop a vision for future. It is also widely acknowledged that while achievements in the field of education, particularly elementary education, are appreciable and noticeable, much still needs to be done in terms of quality and relevance of elementary education. Provision of Universal Elementary Education (UEE) to all children till they complete the age of 14 has been accepted as a national goal. Since 1950 determined efforts have been made to achieve this goal. Although over the years there has been considerable increase in the number of children in schools, the target of universal enrolment and retention has not been achieved as yet. Several million children continue to remain outside the fold of primary education and quite a large number of those enrolled dropout early without completing the first cycle of education. Ironically, the country has the world's larger number of out-of-school children and adult illiterates.

1.1. Issues and Challenges inherited in Quality Education in India:
1.1.1. Quality of Education
Poor quality of elementary education imparted in un-attracted educational settings is another major issue which is equally responsible for pushing children out of school and low achievement of pupils. The issue of quality of elementary education has to be seen in a broader perspective which includes curriculum load, methods of teaching, evaluation process, inadequate

school facilities and teaching-learning material, non-availability of caring and competent teachers and decentralized planning and management. Let us discuss each one of these issues in brief:

1.1.2 Curriculum Load
Most parents and teachers believe that curriculum for primary classes are quite 'heavy' because of mismatch between the quanta of syllabus and the conditions in which it is transacted. Overlap and repetition of content across different subject areas also increase the curriculum load. Syllabus content does not have much relevance to the child's environment. Due to heavy curriculum load, children often become nervous and frustrated with the result that most of them either fail or leave the school. Yashpal Committee Report (1993) rightly mentioned that the burden of non-comprehension creates more serious problems than the simple physical load of school bag. Hence, there is a need to review the curriculum so that its load is reduced.

The National Committee appointed by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (1990) identified Minimum Levels of Learning (MLLs) at primary stage. MLLs have been a major influence on primary education curriculum across the country during the 1990s. It has made teachers sensitive to the idea of directing their teaching-leaning towards development of some competencies in children and not merely towards passing on of information. This is referred to as 'competency based teaching'. However, in some respects the MLL programme has tended to take primary education away from the right track and given it a very narrow focus. MLLs were identified for only three of the six curricular areas i.e. Language, Mathematics and EVS, while the other three areas i.e. Art Education, Health and Physical Education and Work Experience which are also very important from the point of all-round development of the child, were clearly neglected. MLLs were intended to have a well-defined though limited role of helping the teacher monitor and guide the progress of children by using these as some indicators of progress. However, in reality they are mostly seen as 'the total curriculum' for the primary stage for each of the five classes. It is as if as set of important questions for examination were to be treated as the syllabus for a particular subject! Hence, place of MLLs in the curriculum at primary stage needs to be reviewed in a balanced manner.

1.1 .3. Methods of Teaching
It is imperative that the transaction of curriculum has direct impact on learning achievement. Therefore, methods of teaching should provide ample opportunity to the learners to explore, to discover and to learn. NPE-1986/1992 has clearly mentioned that learner-centered approach should be emphasized to give the learner the central place in the process of teaching and learning. It is generally observed that in actual classroom situation, teacher-centered approach is in vogue. More emphasis is on completing the lesson or syllabus using chalk and talk method. Hardly any focus is given to child-centered, activity-based teaching-learning process. There is a need to provide to the pupils self learning materials and activities for making learning a joyful experience for them.

1.1.4 Evaluation
Quality in elementary education necessitates high learning achievement so that dropout and failure at examination may be reduced to the minimum. National Educational Policy-1986 therefore made a plea for defining minimum levels of learning at all stages of education. Attainment of MLLs requires continuous comprehensive evaluation for reliable and valid evidence of their attainment. But due to our continued dependence on end results in terms of child's position in annual / terminal examinations, the concept of continuous evaluation has in fact added to the pressure on child in terms of preparation for increased number of examinations during the year. The process has further led to the neglect of development of affective and psycho-motor aspects of child's personality. Evaluation is mostly used in schools as a grading device but it should be used as an effective feedback mechanism. Feedback from evaluation needs to be interpreted carefully for remedial work. Weaknesses not remedied at the right time lead to further deterioration in learning, increased frustration and also dropouts from school. Hence, there is a need to adopt and implement the concept of continuous comprehensive evaluation in its right spirit.

1.1.5 Inadequate School Facilities
Lack of appropriate physical facilities, poor teacher-pupil ratio and poor teaching- learning materials add to the lower the quality of school. To improve the human and physical resources available in primary schools, a scheme of 'Operation Blackboard' was launched in 1987-88. Hundred per cent central assistance is provided for appointment of an additional teacher in single-teacher schools. 48% of the funds are provided for construction of school building by the Ministry of Rural Areas and Employment. On the basis of observations of audit and evaluation reports, it has been observed that several States have not utilised the funds sanctioned for teaching-learning equipment under Operation Blackboard. This situation can be attributed to lack of sufficient flexibility and decentralized procurement and supply of teaching-learning materials.

1.1.6 Non-availability of Caring and Competent Teachers
Inadequacies related to teachers pose a very serious problem. Inadequacies stemming from non-availability of appropriate infrastructural facilities and poor socio-economic background of pupils can be compensated to a large extent if the teachers are caring, competent, and sincere and committed to the profession. Teacher preparation programmes continue to be dull and stereotyped with the result that the half-heartedly trained teachers lack core competencies and motivation to work properly. Such teachers are unable to meet the needs of the school with a large heterogeneous population of pupils. Teacher Education Curriculum should meet the professional needs of prospective teachers. Pre-service training programmes need conceptual' clarity of the role of teachers to prepare teachers to their fullest potential. Provision of need-based in-service training further develops teacher competencies which in turn improve school effectiveness.

1.1.7 Lack of Decentralized Planning Process
A large number of central and state sponsored programmes launched for quality primary education have been found deficient in delivering the goods as they were top heavy and were not properly contextualized. It is now being realised that the planning process needs to be decentralized and based on disaggregated targets. The Panchyats and Local Bodies are expected to look after primary education. Each Panchyat will constitute a Village Education Committee (VEC) which will be responsible for the administration of education programmes at the village level. These VECs will help in operationalisation of micro-level planning and school mapping in the village through systematic house-to-house survey and periodic, discussion with parents. The district level body will implement, supervise and monitor all educational programmes, including those in the non-formal and adult education sectors.

2. Role of Social Work Educator in School Setting
The quality of education depends upon many factors such as quality of curriculum, institutional Structure, competence of students, competence of the teachers recruited and promoted their roles and responsibilities and the skill and type of knowledge component developed and applied in the teaching-learning processes. For any professional branch of education dealing with the needs of the society, it is imperative to incorporate the societal needs in its curriculum. This requirement is vital for the social work profession, which directly deals with the human issues. Besides this, as a dynamic profession, the social work education has to keep pace with the changing social conditions by updating its knowledge base contextually to make it indigenous.

The educator, who is the 'key person,' is largely responsible for the growth and establishment of the profession. Fulfillment of this responsibility depends upon the role played by the educators who are involved in training the professionals and developing knowledge for the profession. The social work educators (SWE) impart knowledge and skills to the students to develop appropriate attitude for working with people and establishing linkages between theories and praxis wisdom within the socio-economic, political and cultural context in which they are embedded). In return the social work educators are expected to develop contextual and indigenous knowledge based on their experiences to make the education more relevant.

Since its inception the social work profession in India has been practicing various approaches. Gore (2011) has described the order in which social work education in India began with the religious traditional approach, the liberal reformist approach, the secular missionary approach, the ethical revolutionary approach and professional social work approach. While understanding the realities and reflecting on the challenges facing Indian society, social work professionals from India gradually became aware of the facts and made situational changes in the approaches to social work education and practice to make it more contextual and indigenous. Social work bases its methodology on a systematic body of evidence based knowledge derived from research and practice evaluation, including local and indigenous knowledge specific to the context. It recognizes the complexity of interactions between human beings and their environment. The social work profession draws on theories of human development and behavior and social systems to analyze complex situations and to facilitate individual, organizational, social and cultural changes.

Schools employ social workers on their staff to deal with social and emotional factors in the child, in his family or in his social milieu. The importance of social case workers has been recognized by schools. Friedlander maintains that the school social works with four parties; 1) the child, 2) the family, 3) the school staff, and 4) the community. The school social worker   works for removing the maladjustment of the child; he tries to change the attitudes of the child, the parents, teachers and community groups for the adjustment of the child to the requirements of the school. Behaviour problems and discipline are usually dealt with successfully by the school social worker; The worker changes the behavior of the child so that he may adopt and adjust better with the conditions in the school and home. The role of school social worker has also been recognized in preventive service involving constructive mental health programmes. Some countries have included school social work in school programme with the aim of preventing and combating Juvenile delinquency.

The personality and behaviour, school adjustments, detrimental conditions in the home adversely affect the child's behaviour in school. The social worker in such cases may render service to the child, the teacher and the parent. The social worker examines schools reports, medical records and psychological tests. He conducts personal interviews with the child, the parent and the teacher.

The social worker may use public agencies for the child and his family. The school social worker has to perform a variety of functions in the educational setting – providing case work services, working with the child, his parents and teachers. The worker will have to understand the physical and psychological needs of the child; He has to offer counseling, emotional support and brief psycho-therapy. By effectively handling the child's transference, he can dilute/eliminate his hostility towards the teacher.

The worker will have to understand the role expectations of the teacher and the student in a realistic manner. So also, the worker will have to examine the role performance of the parents and the child objectively. The school social worker has to interpret the needs of the child, parent and the school and try to bring about reconciliation between the needs, capacities and resources of these three parties. In dealing with the drop-outs, the worker will have to enlist the support of the child, his parents, his teachers and outside public and private agencies and resources. The worker has to use the community resources – public and private resources for the solution of the problems of the school and the child. The worker can help children belonging to the socially and economically disadvantaged classes, by mobilizing the inner resources of the children and outer resources of the community. The worker can provide referral services in cases of children requiring the services of some specialized agencies or specialists. The social worker in the school setting should organize group work activities in the form of recreation, story-telling and the like to increase the capacity of social participation. The worker can also try to create attitudes of modernity among children, implying belief in secularism, rationality, democracy, socialism, science and technology and belief in the dignity of man and in distributive justice.

Dr. Desai is of the view that "social work in schools is only one aspect of social work in the educational setting which would also include pre-primary, as well as college and university education". There is no doubt that school social work is most needed when the child is in the school and when his personality is in a formative stage.

2.1 .Family Therapy
This must aim at improving communication between individual members of the family. The family members should learn to express to each other their individual needs, to share feelings and resolve conflicts constructively. The task of the therapist is to help the family grow as a 'unit'. In course of therapy, feelings can be ventilated; family members will become more sensitive to each other's needs; they will be able to communicate with empathy and understanding.

The worker should help parents foster a good home climate. There should be open and genuine communication between family members. According to Hurlock (1976), "An unfavourable home climate comes from friction between family members, favouritism, feelings of inadequacy for the roles family members are expected to play, clashes between family members with different interests and values, authoritarian control by parents and lack of emotional warmth in family relationships.

2.2 Problems of children that a teacher normally comes Across in School
All children have some problems during their growing years. Problems are (a) severe, (b) long lasting, (c) threatens school performance, (d) disrupts class room activities. Examples of such problems could be extreme timidity, aggression, or over-activity. Problems of children at different ages are given below.

Age group of 5 to 12 Years
Children may have difficulties in learning things, both in school and outside it. Their difficulties may be related to anxiety about going to school. The specific problems of this age group are given below.

A child may cry and refuse to go to school. They have deep-seated desire to avoid school. They may have genuine difficulties in learning. They may have problems with speech. The parents or worker may consult medical person o speech therapist. Some children may be restless and overactive. They are likely to be unreasonable. The parents should seek outside help in this regard. Children may begin wetting or soiling himself before reaching the toilet due to anxiety. The children may have habit disorders or behaviour problems like thumb-seeking, nail-biting, day-dreaming. They may be referred to child guidance clinic.

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Age group of 12 to 16 years
As a result of physical development, both boys and girls experience awareness of their sexuality. The teacher can discuss in separate groups of boys and girls, relevant aspects of sex education. There may be failure in academic performance due to lack of interest, poor intellectual capacity, emotional problems, or socio-economic problems.

There may arise behaviour problems which include truancy, lying, stealing, aggression, disobedience, excessive timidity and abuse of drugs or alcohol. These problems are more likely to occur if the youngster is failing in the school. The youngster may show emotional problems like moodiness, depression, excessive sensitivity, fear or anxiety. It is helpful to talk it out with him/her and provide immediate help.

Children who are slow learners and suffer from mild retardation tend to become school dropouts in the absence of special teaching facilities; concern for the rental health of teachers is relatively recent. Today, we recognize that emotional well-being of teachers is vital to any school programme. For doing full justice to his/her role, a teacher himself/herself individual should be a mentally well balanced and emotionally satisfied individual when mentally healthy, teachers work towards the mental health of their pupils; one can ensure mentally healthy citizens of tomorrow.

2.3. Problems of Students
Students in schools may have a variety of problems. The source of these problems may be lie within the student, in the family and community or in the school system. The problems include, separation from parents, adjustment in a new situation, peer group relations, emotional insecurity, poor concentration in class, slow learning, poor comprehension, low mental ability, and disinterest in studies and so on. Social workers may directly deal with these students and make home visits.

2.4 Services for population at Risk
The student population at risk may comprise students belonging to the disadvantaged and weaker sections of society, physically and mentally handicapped students, children of single parents (widowed or divorced, children of minority groups. Children of prostitutes or of parents afflicted with leprosy and other such diseases. Such children may face multiple problems in schools because of their alienation from the mainstream culture. The early identification of students at risk is one more activity undertaken by social workers in schools.

2.5 Development of coping skills
Social workers recognize the need to help students develop coping skills. To meet this need, development programmes can be designed for promoting self-awareness, self-esteem, problem-solving skills, and communication and leadership qualities. Various tests can be used to measure the efficacy programmes. This will enable the social worker to know just how effective a particular development programme is. Programmes on promoting parent-child communication can be followed by scales to measure parental attitude towards child rearing or family climate and so on.

2.6 Growth centered groups
Children need opportunities to explore and examine their values, beliefs and decisions as they become more independent. Even normal children use the group structure and interactions to gain greater awareness, understanding and acceptance of the self and others. Growth-centered groups, help children realize and utilize their inner resources to cope with developmental problems and lead more self-fulfilled lives. Growth centered groups create the atmosphere for children to capitalize on their inner energies so as to enhance their personal growth. Through a group situation, a sense of acceptance, caring, support and encouragement is developed enhancing feelings of security, self-assurance and belonging which are all essential factors leading to higher levels of personal growth.

3. Conclusion and Suggestions
Both the school setting and the family have mutually complementary role tasks to aid the growth of children. In reality, the young growing child is dependent on the immediate environment that is the home, the neighbourhood and later the school, to meet his growth needs. A significant period of childhood is spent in school. The lacunae in the school system generate the need for school social work.

Case work is one of the direct methods of social work which uses the case-by-case approach for dealing with individuals or families as regards their problems of social functioning. Social case work helps the child for his adjustment in the school system. School social case workers use their specialized knowledge and service for helping the child to cope with his health, educational, social and emotional problems. The School Social Worker enables each child to have 'situational treatment' in accordance with his problem.

Schools employ social workers on their staff to deal with social and emotional factors in the child, in his family or in his social milieu. The importance of social case workers has been recognized by schools. The school social worker has to perform a variety of functions in the educational setting – providing case work services, working with the child, his parents and teachers. Family therapy aims at improving communication between individual members of the family. The workers should help parents foster a good home climate. The worker should help parents foster a good home climate. All children have some problems during their growing years. Problems are (a) severe, (b) long lasting, (c) threaten school performance, (d) disrupt class-room activities. The school social worker should possess certain skills and abilities: 1) capacity to individualize the children; to mobilize their inner strengths; ability to elicit the cooperation of the parents, skill in counseling of parents etc.

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