



## **Role of social workers in farmers training**

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### **Abstract**

Social work is widely considered one of the noblest professions which allow people to make significant changes to the society and is a worthy profession from humanitarian perspective. These individuals and groups have made significant impact across different areas but there are still many areas where social workers need to intervene in a more intensive as well as extensive way. Social service is one of the cornerstone and essential need of in the modern times to implement reforms, carry out utilitarian procedures and empower millions of marginalized groups and make them resourceful enough not just to be able to manage their own lives but also to empower others and maintain the cycle of empowerment.

Social workers can mediate in the agricultural process on two crucial levels- first it can familiarize the local people with the new technologies, available subsidies and facilities either by the state or by institutions and organizations, secondly, it can use the firsthand knowledge of the condition of the farmers to understand the need of the hour and convey the same to the policy makers. We have seen how many farmer's agitations and movements have been successfully organized in our country on a large scale, but still two major lacunae in this whole process has limited the impact of these movements on a much greater scale- one, there is a dearth of larger social consciousness among the masses regarding the problem of farmers in general and these movements in specific. Social workers need to take this burden on their heads so as to ensure that not only the information is disseminated smoothly and effectively but also a larger audience can be built who not only can be aware of the condition of farmers but can also empathize with it, thus providing the base of mobilization of these groups for future causes.

**Keywords:** social worker, farmers, training, innovation, village, mobilization

### **1. Introduction**

Social work is widely considered one of the noblest professions which allow people to make significant changes to the society and is a worthy profession from humanitarian perspective. These individuals and groups have made significant impact across different areas but there are still many areas where social workers need to intervene in a more intensive as well as extensive way. Social service is one of the cornerstone and essential need of in the modern times to implement reforms, carry out utilitarian procedures and empower millions of marginalized groups and make them resourceful enough not just to be able to manage their own lives but also to empower others and maintain the cycle of empowerment.

But over the years it has been observed that most of the people working for the society are convent educated urban sophisticated individuals and groups who despite their earnest attempts and intent are not able to make structural changes in the society for the simple fact that they are separated from the heartland of the nation and are not exposed to the ground realities of our society. Learning these nitty gritty also includes acknowledging their own privileges and ability to adapt to the changing situation. Scholars have pointed out that one reason why agriculture and pastoralist economies are often comparatively disadvantaged as compared to the industrial economies is because the policy makers who are entrusted with the job of policy making on agriculture have no experience of the field on an individual level thus making their work a secondary patronizing gaze from above without developing the requisite skill for tackling them as well as the experience for shouldering such responsibilities. Thus, proposal needs

to be advocated to allow social service to penetrate the agricultural arena in a more inclusive and intensive level. Through this endeavor we can aim for an amalgamation of experience with paper qualification. This would also bring into the table practical skills required for carrying out the agricultural process as well as provide ample opportunity to the social worker to work within the confines of limited resources and socio-cultural hassles. In this case the role of social worker can be really influential in bridging the gap between the state and the farmers. Social workers can mediate in the agricultural process on two crucial levels- first it can familiarize the local people with the new technologies, available subsidies and facilities either by the state or by institutions and organizations, secondly, it can use the firsthand knowledge of the condition of the farmers to understand the need of the hour and convey the same to the policy makers. We have seen how many farmer's agitations and movements have been successfully organized in our country on a large scale, but still two major lacunae in this whole process has limited the impact of these movements on a much greater scale- one, there is a dearth of larger social consciousness among the masses regarding the problem of farmers in general and these movements in specific. Social workers need to take this burden on their heads so as to ensure that not only the information is disseminated smoothly and effectively but also a larger audience can be built who not only can be aware of the condition of farmers but can also empathize with it, thus providing the base of mobilization of these groups for future causes.

The question that we need to ask is twofold- what is the role of a social worker in promoting agricultural innovation and

training the farmers? And secondly, how is he supposed to do it? In many regions a sizeable population are directly dependent on agriculture, which though the backbone of Indian economy, is also quite vulnerable and uncertain in terms of its results. Thus people need to be aware of alternative and sustainable ways of irrigation, which for once lowers the dependence of farmers on agriculture. Secondly, it will allow the farmers to increase per area and per person productivity. Though the use of machinery has its own cons too- both in terms of loss of workforce who are replaced by machines, which also can lead to direct as well as disguised unemployment. Social worker needs to be aware of the regional specifications to adapt and adopt a particular method of agriculture in tandem with agricultural scientists. In many regions like hilly areas of Uttarakhand, the problem of migration is catastrophic. People here find no or negligible incentive in clinging to agriculture as there is hardly any scope of earning livelihood through agriculture. Adding to the problem is the lack of infrastructure both in terms of farming technology as well as health and education and all the basic facilities essential for dignified existence. Social workers need to follow the neo-deterministic or halt and go approach wherein innovations and developments should take place within the restraints of any potential threat to the habitat or the socio-ecological space, which is to say without making any drastic development (which anyways is not something that can be a small number of social workers in a stipulated time period). We must note the importance of agriculture in the village life which can be better expressed as their way of life and which emanates out of a primacy of food. What we find here is that the agricultural process is not mere an economic act but cast its influence on all spheres of human existence as we find marriages being performed mostly in summers after the crops so that the agricultural work is never obstructed. Land is valued as a valuable asset and the headman of the village tries his level best to maintain his de facto control over the land. Actually the economic relations particularly agriculture paved way for other spaces of interaction for example in many villages the dead bodies are buried in the ancestral land. Here the control over land becomes a status marker as well as economic prerogative because traditionally such land needs to be left vacuum for few years which for the proletariat is a great loss. The village community has an acquisitiveness associated with it and land is the medium of this acquisitiveness. Also the land hunger which is a universal attribute of the village gives impeccable value to land. Gender relations also have deep impact over this land. Using classic Marxist paradigm land surplus is a major aspect of domination of upper caste upper class male over others. Thus women are relegated to the position of kitchen as a nurturer and dispenser of household chores. But even here, the concessions that women receives within this patriarchal structural has a deep rooted economic importance firstly because women acquires acquisition over land not in her natal home but in her husband's home. Secondly women economic sphere of interaction is mitigated by their economic duty of selling paddy for household object. Thirdly women acquire resources and control over these resources as she acquires age. Thus in social stratum, while getting influenced by wife is an unmanly behavior, at the same time, mother has great influence in the society. Similarly the teleological purpose of land and plants make them sacred and thus we find how

cutting tree becomes an inauspicious and unethical wastage of resources. Thus training the farmers is also a caste, class and gender conscious activity. Men and women traditionally play differential roles in the agricultural process, which the social worker needs to take cognizance of. For the past one year group of undergraduate students have been working in the region of Almora, Uttarakhand to maintain the agricultural balance of the region and at the same time encourage people to return to their land by making basic arrangements in terms of social and built infrastructure. Similar work has been carried out by committed individuals as well as organizations.

Finally, the social workers need to overcome the logistical and administrative hurdles in overcoming the institutional problems in achieving the requisite results. While India is known to be a predominantly agrarian country the state of development in terms of innovations and new research is hardly something to feel proud of. While the state government have established number of centres of agricultural research (ICAR) and krishi vigyan vidyalaya their quality and output is not very encouraging. There are many administrative and logistical hurdle in their case first being their inability to function as an autonomous body beyond the confines of state government, secondly new research is in crippled stage in these institutions lacking the means, budget and quality of faculty in such institutions. Rampant corruption and nepotism has narrowed down the chances of upsurge and despite food production techniques, food preferences of the consumer and production structure of the nation, they are still not up to date with the recent developments in this area and inherent bias of these institutions towards food production at the cost of neglect of animal husbandry is very much evident here. To save the future of these institutions it is necessary to make these ICAR an autonomous body. Also a larger part of the GDP needs to be allocated for their development. Technological innovations and administrative efficiency are both required to maintain the quality and relevance of these institutions and to fulfill the needs of the ever growing state. These developments coupled with the efforts of social workers can work wonder in the emancipation of farmers and the overall progress of Indian agricultural economy. To achieve this end, it's not just important to initiate training programs but also there need to educate and inform people and raise awareness on this issue. For this purpose, widespread nationwide campaigns needs to be initiated, in which not only common men but participation of certain influential people of the society needs to be included to increase its "face value". All in all social worker's job is not an act or event but a gradual process which requires investment of time, effort, intent and commitment on their part.

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