

Book Review



## Organizing Community for Social Work

Pooja Mishra, 2020, Jaipur, ABD publishers, ISBN: 978-81-8376-732-3, Hardcover pp. viii+208, Price: Rs. 1595

The book “*Organizing Community for Social Work*” examines social work and community development comprehensively. In the book’s six chapters, the author examines the scope of social work, international community development, concerns connected to community development, trends in social welfare administration, social research, and the processes of social work with communities.

The first chapter, *Social Work and Community Development*, elaborates on the process of community organisation and the roles and functions of the personnel for community development, including elected officials, administrators, local leaders’ front-line workers, professional community development specialists, and community social workers. The content of the training for social workers for community development and the courses offered for community development are also described in the subsequent sessions of the chapter. The relevance of casework for community development is discussed by emphasizing the applicability of casework to community work over the traditional curative and remedial aspects of social casework.

The second chapter delves into the international perspectives and practices of community development. The purpose of community development according to the United Nations framework and the role of various UN agencies in international community development are broadly explained. The significance of social planning in community development is also analyzed by citing several narratives of social planning experiments carried out in various countries under the initiatives of international agencies. The analysis has summarized key lessons that the social planning process must take into account the cultural, social, and economic conditions and the existing laws and customs, and it must tend to coordinate the efforts of all public and voluntary organizations at the local, regional and national levels to achieve its goals (p.44).

The issues related to community development in the British and American contexts are described in the

introductory session of the third chapter to focus the discussion on the theme of ethnicity and radical discrimination, the critical issues related to social work practice in the global context. Why social work should take account of ethnicity is discussed based on the social work principle of the centrality of the individual, which is an indispensable foundation for a practice that differentiates according to the client’s needs and experience. The rising recognition of the unique and continuing needs of ethnic minorities illustrates the relevance of inclusive policies and practices in the social sector.

The practice aspects of social work are analysed using the generic philosophical foundation of social work in the fourth chapter. Social work research is presented as a technique facilitating social work practice; social work research becomes one of the sources from which social work knowledge is drawn. Though the methods applied in social work research have been largely derived from other social sciences, it has been recognized that social work research needs to develop and define its tools for better conceptualising social work issues and problems.

Short descriptions of various community welfare organisations are presented in the fifth chapter to explain their fields of engagement, nature, and role in community development. The international agencies engaged in social welfare are also described, giving a bird’s-eye view of their operations in divergent fields of welfare and development. The analysis of the managerial process adopted in community welfare organisations and the subsequent discussion on the emerging trends in welfare administration made this session very comprehensive concerning the role of community welfare organisations in the global context.

The sixth and final chapter of the book describes the methods and processes of social work community organisations. The phases of the community organisation method are well explained by utilising different theoretical concepts employed in development practice, namely the concepts of goal orientation, change process, representativeness, need, voluntary participation, enabling,

and so on. This chapter has presented two cases that illustrate the social workers' practice of community organisation in social work agencies. First is a narrative of a typical day of practice of a community social worker, depicting the various activities to be done in the community organisation practice. The second example illustrates the process of a project-centred planning committee. Concepts, principles, and particular areas of knowledge that have a bearing on the use of community organisation methods were discussed in the volume. The author also brings out the scope of social work research in community practice as a worker's commitment to scientific inquiry, which shall enhance the quilt of community organisation practice. Integrating the elements of social casework, social group work, and social work research

with the community organisation method is the overarching orientation put forward by the author for scaling up the effectiveness of community organisation practice. This perspective aligns significantly with the contemporary discourse on integrated social work practices and evidence-based practices in social work.

The author has provided an annotated bibliography and a detailed index to help the readers find further references. Still, the omission of in-text citations was a deficit in this book. The proper sequencing of the subject matter of each chapter could have made this volume more reader-friendly.

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