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THEORETICAL BASE AND SOCIOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF WORKING WITH COMMUNITY



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Abstract: In this paper the theoretical base of community is given in detailed. The concern of community work in professional social work and the roots of human behavior are deeply rooted in community life as the behaviour is highly influenced by the local culture and every community has its own culture where every individual develops web of social relations for meeting his social needs. The method of social work has its own premises in community work is illustrated in this paper. The present scenario has the communities being influenced by technology, communication, mass media which has direct bearing on human problem is discussed the in detailed. The concept community and its dimensions are also explained in detailed. The social functions of community for well-being of individual are also explained in detailed. The essential elements of community and its relevance to social work helps in understanding how effective community work can solve the social problems. The sociological aspect of community work states that that in any society, in any community, in any institution, in any interaction between individuals, there is an element of culture, and that includes something of each of those six cultural dimensions. All of these are learned from birth. The new-born child is like an animal, not yet a human being, but he or she begins learning culture (humanizing) immediately (for example, when drinking from the breast) by interacting with other humans, and thus starts becoming human. (Many say that this humanizing process begins in the womb). This process of learning, and thus of becoming, continues until death. If you are not learning, you are dead. When you are at a community meeting, when you are in a classroom, when you meet someone face to face, wherever you are, you are part of culture, part of the sociocultural system, and you can find all six dimensions.

Keywords: Community, social life, organizing, social needs, community culture

INTRODUCTION:

Social work is establishing as an independent profession in India. Since last three decade various departments of Government of India such as rural development, urban development local self Government , corporate houses, hospitals are preferring trained social worker to shoulder various tasks related to community and individuals. Indian labour laws has made it compulsory to appoint welfare officer in factories and industries the social degree became a passport to enter in industrial sector. The various funding agencies are also giving preference for the appointment in social sector. Soon after the professional social work education various Governmental and voluntary organizations are very keen to provide an opportunity in social sector. Therefore new avenues are opened for professional social in various sectors. Though these opportunities are limited it has opened a new vista to acquire the higher and prestigious positions in employment sector. The scope for practicing Social Work as private profession in India is considerably negligible. The image of a social worker amongst the general public is gradually emerging various fields. Though it was very difficult to conceive a common man that there could be professionals called social

workers to be approached to get help for solving the problem when facing personal or family problems but since last twenty years one finds that there is a realization about contribution of professional social workers. Helping each other is considered as a noble cause in Indian society. Everybody therefore shows eagerness to help those who are need to support. The very concept of professional social work is not rooted among Indian minds; trained social workers are struggling to establish roots in society. It is also to remember that profession wise it is the clients who approach the professionals and not the other way round.

If we look at the methods of professional social work, they talk about (1) helping people individually (Social Case Work Method) (2) helping people in groups (Social Group Work Method) and (3) helping people's communities (Community Organization/ Development Method). The last two methods cannot be practiced by trained social workers in private practice since these require a larger setting. Only organized bodies such government, corporate houses, NGOs can afford it. Trained social workers therefore, have to be necessarily employed to be able to practice these two methods (Chavis, 1990). This leaves Social Case Work method as the only method that can be employed by trained

social workers to follow independent practice. In Social Case Work method, the trained social workers interview his/her client, in private and takes down the personal history. Through this he/she makes an assessment of the likely cause for the problem faced by the client. The process of interviewing is simple chit-chatting. The client may not even know if he/she is being helped. One interview with the client is not sufficient; more have to be arranged. Some clients may not be prepared for repeat visits. Even if the cause is discovered successfully, the solution that is offered to the client may not be out of the ordinary. It consists of plain suggestions and motivational talks. Unlike doctors and psychiatrists who prescribe medicines, professional social work prescribes no such thing. This leaves the clients a bit disappointed. In fact, many people have been giving advises to them.

Experience shows that people in India are happier discussing their personal problems with Astrologers, Tantrics, Priests and Saddhus for they offer Mantras, Tabej (locket), Bhasma (ashes), flowers, etc said to be containing charismatic powers or ask to perform certain rituals such as feeding the fish meat, donating mustard oil, performing puja etc. that heal all the problems. People have no hesitation in paying them; sometimes even paying big money. It appears that people are more interested in purchasing hope than getting rid of the problem. There are, however, a number of current crises facing community. Loss of the sense of community based on "place" is a worldwide phenomenon. Millions of people all over the planet are being displaced from their homes for various reasons. Others are forced from their homes by economic necessity, such as farmers from rural communities, who are migrating to cities in vast numbers, searching for work. Such migration destroys families system and undermines the traditional sense of trust found in community, increases feelings of isolation and exclusion, and creates a host of social problems Fawcett (1993). Even where people still maintain their homes, there are challenges to their survival.

Community Development Definition

"Community development is directed in particular at people who feel excluded from society. It consists of a set of methods which can broaden vision and capacity for social change, and approaches, including consultation, advocacy and relationships with local groups. It is a way of working which is informed by certain principles which seek to encourage communities – people who live in the same areas or who have something else in common– to tackle for themselves the problems which they face and identify to be important, and which aim to empower them to change things by developing their own skills, knowledge and experience and also by working in partnership with other groups and with statutory agencies. The way in which such change is achieved is vital and so both the task and the process is important."

Such loss of "community of place" can also bring loss of communities of memory and communities governed by trust. In the late nineteenth the development of systems of culture, communities invariably moved from a shared experience and likeness, toward individual's isolation from

each other, there is a strong sense of competition, relationships are contractual, and monetary values prevail. Such a progression has been noted several scientists. In this century, Pitirim A. Sorokin, for example, saw the societies moving away from spiritual truth and values towards self-indulgence and material values. But is such a progression inevitable? Indeed, some writers have gone so far as to characterize the current devotion to those values as a worldwide "religious" phenomenon. Till today there is no set of common social values generally accepted by the world, suitable to respective culture and location in a particular community (Hoggett, 1997). However an attempt has recently been made to introduce an internationally accepted "Charter of Human Responsibilities." This document "provides a broader ethical context to the principles inherent within the Universal Declaration of Human Rights". The charter has not yet gained wide acceptance, but its formulation is a hopeful sign.

On this background it is clear from the variety of problems confronting humanity at various stages in its history shows that the community development programme must be pursued at all levels, from the local to the global. Religion is one powerful means to address these problems, since it has traditionally been concerned with two broad questions: the purpose of existence and the nature of the community. In fact, the word "religion" itself is derived from religion, means "to bind together." According to Daniel Bell, (1993), the word 'community' is often used very loosely in discussions about community development, usually to indicate something smaller than 'society'. However, the most commonly used definitions fall into two main categories: communities of place and communities of common interest.

The Concept of Community

The term community has two distinct meanings (1) a group of interacting people, (2) living in some proximity (i.e., in space, time, or relationship). Community usually refers to a social unit larger than a household that shares common values and has social cohesion. The term can also refer to the national community or international community, and biologically, a community is a group of interacting living organisms sharing a populated environment.

The first step in considering the meaning of community is to understand the concept. What one person calls a community may not match another person's definition. Those interested in working with a community must first have a clear picture of the entity they are trying to address. Understanding the dimensions of the concept of community will enable those initiating engagement processes to better target their efforts and work with community leaders and members in developing appropriate engagement strategies. The community may be defined from two viewpoints — a broader sociological or systems perspective as well as a more personal, individual perspective. In either case, central to the definition of a community is a sense of "who is included and who is excluded from membership". A person may be a member of a community by choice, as with voluntary associations, or by virtue of their innate personal characteristics, such as age, gender, race, or ethnicity. As a result, individuals may belong

to multiple communities at any one time. When initiating community engagement efforts, one must be aware of these complex associations in deciding which individuals to work within the targeted community.

From a sociological perspective, the notion of community refers to a group of people united by at least one common characteristic. Such characteristics could include geography, shared interests, values, experiences, or traditions. Sociologist, once said that if one were to go to a sociology department in search of a single, simple definition of the word community, one would "...never leave. To some people it's a feeling, to some people it's relationships, to some people it's a place, to some people it's an institution". Communities may be viewed as systems composed of individual members and sectors that have a variety of distinct characteristics and interrelationships. These sectors are populated by groups of individuals who represent specialized functions, activities, or interests within a community system. Each sector operates within specific boundaries to meet the needs of its members and those the sector is designed to benefit. For example, schools focus on student education; the transportation sector focuses on moving people and products, economic entities focus on enterprise and employment, and health care agencies focus on prevention and treatment of diseases and injuries. In reality, these sectors are a few of the many elements that comprise the overall community system.

A community can be viewed as a living organism. For the community to be successful, each sector has its role. The systems views, healthy communities are those that have well-integrated, interdependent sectors that share responsibility to resolve problems and enhance the well-being of the community. It is increasingly recognized that to successfully address a community's complex problems and quality of life issues, it is necessary to promote better integration, collaboration, and coordination of resources from these multiple community sectors. Following are the popular definitions used in community practice. A community is not a collection of individual human beings. It is a super-organism that belongs to part of culture, composed of interactions between people, everything that is learned. Its six dimensions include: technology, economy, political power, social patterns, shared values, beliefs and ideas. It is not transmitted by biological means, but by learning. It is never homogeneous, having many factions, competition and conflicts within it. A community is a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts.

DEFINITIONS OF THE COMMUNITY

Definition 1. Community means - a group of people living in a particular local area; or a group of people having ethnic or cultural or religious characteristics in common or a group of people sharing a given language or dialect neighborhood, small town, village or settlement. A community of people smaller than a town where the common ownership exists; "they shared a community of possessions", Ownership which usually refers to the relation of an owner to the thing possessed; possession with the right to transfer possession to others. The other definitions are as follows.

Definition 2. Community is a way of relating to

other persons as brothers and sisters who share a common origin, a common dignity, and a common destiny. Community involves learning to live in terms of an interconnected "we" more than an isolated'. It involves making choices which reinforce the experience of relatedness and foster the sense of belonging and interdependence. Community begins, but does not end, in our face to face relationships with the persons who are closest to us.

Definition 3. A community is best defined as a group of people who, regardless of the diversity of their backgrounds, have been able to accept and transcend their differences, enabling them to communicate effectively and openly and to work together toward goals identified as being for their common good.

Definition 4. A community is a group of two or more people who have been able to accept and transcend their differences regardless of the diversity of their backgrounds (social, spiritual, educational, ethnic, economic, political, etc.) This enables them to communicate effectively and openly and to work together toward & the goals identified as being for their common good. The word community. . . can refer to a specific group of people (a geographical community, a church congregation) or it can describe a quality of relationship based on certain values and principles.

Definition 5. A group of people living in the same locality and under the same government and the district or locality in which such a group lives. Or a group of people having common interests: the scientific community; the international business community and a group viewed as forming a distinct segment of society and a community of interests and sharing, participation, and fellowship.

Definition 6. According to Oxford Dictionary: It is a group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common or a group of people living together and practicing common ownership or particular area or place considered together with its inhabitants e.g. a rural community local communities. A community - the people of a district or country considered collectively, especially in the context of social values and responsibilities.

Definition 7. Community: is that group of people sharing beliefs that allow communal understandings which is

Expressed in the Unique Language allowed by the shared beliefs about words, their meaning and use.

United by Agreement on manners, aestivates and justice, which is the found in behavior of its members that dictates the duty of every citizen

Remembered by tradition, which is continued through

successive generations by traditional child rearing

By sharing the same process of thought as individuals,

communal minds are subject to the same shortcomings of understanding as individuals:

(i) Understanding appears only after the formation of a basic set of values (morality), which become an essential and immutable part of the culture.

(ii) Personality As the understanding of an individual confers

a personality, so does the understanding of a community, and the culture of the community.

(iii) Honesty depends upon their nature, if unselfish, they will revere truth; otherwise truth will be discarded in favour of convenience.

Definition 8. McMillan & Chavis (1986) define sense of community as “a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together.”

Definition 9. Gusfield (1975) identified two dimensions of community: territorial and relational. The relational dimension of community has to do with the nature and quality of relationships in community, may even have no discernible territorial demarcation, as in the case of a community of scholars working in a particular specialty, who have some kind of contact and quality of relationship, but may live and work in disparate locations, perhaps even throughout the world. Other communities may seem to be defined primarily according to territory, as in case of neighborhoods, but even in such cases, proximity or shared territory cannot by itself constitute a community; the relational dimension is also essential.

The, essential elements of community

(i) Group of people: Community is a group of human beings. It is not possible to form a community without a group of men and women.

(ii) Definite locality: A community always occupies a definite geographical area. Locality is the physical basis of community. Without a definite locality, social relations between human beings cannot be established and the 'we' feeling cannot evolve.

(iii) Community Sentiment: Community sentiment means a feeling of belonging together. It is “we feeling” among the members. The members of a community speak the same language, conform to the same mores, possess the same sentiment, and have the same attitudes.

(iv) Likeness: The people in a community share a common way of life. Their customs, traditions, mores, language etc. are similar.

(v) Permanency: A community is not temporary like a crowd or a mob. It is relatively stable. It includes a permanent life in a definite place.

(vi) Neutrality: Communities are not deliberately created. They are not made by planned efforts. An individual is born in a community. It has a natural growth of its own.

(vii) A particular Name: Every community has some particular name. In the words of Lumley, “It points identity, it indicates reality, it points out individuality, it often describes personality and each community is something of a personality”.

(viii) Size: A community may be big or small. A small community may be included in a wider community. For example, a city and a village may be included in a district. District may enclose small communities-like villages, towns, tribes etc.

(ix) Wider ends: People in community share several common interests. They associate not for the fulfillment of a particular

end. The ends of a community are wider. People work together to fulfill some common interests.

(x) Regulation of Relations: Every community in course of time develops a system of traditions, customs, and morals.

(xi) Shared Identity: The lifeblood of a robust community is the creation of a shared identity, deepening the 'pools of shared meaning' and forming a community narrative while fostering attachment.

(xii) Organizational learning :Organizational learning is best enabled when the philosophy behind communities of practice are clearly defined; their goals, mission and vision are explicit and tangible. Over time, this results in the development of shared mental models and a shared purpose. Sustainability results when system thinking or the feedback loop is vibrant and vital.

(xiii) Active Participation :Active participation (rather than passive) is active involvement in social process. It involves participation not just in translating the tangible ideas into embodied experience, but in recontextualising and personalizing its meaning. Eventually, this leads to the self organization that creates the most robust and engaged communities.

(xiv) Alignment of Individuals :Alignment requires the ability to co-ordinate perspectives and actions in order to direct energies to a common purpose. The challenge of alignment is to connect local efforts to broader goals and conversations in ways that allow 'learners' to invest their energy into common (but personalized) vision.

(xv) Boundary Encounters :Encounters involving sharing (best) practices and perspectives among naturally evolving groups within the community. These encounters involve connections that effect and align the way each cluster connects to support common goals. Crucial to the success of the boundary encounter is the role of highly skilled brokers, who straddle different groups and exchange process.

(xvi) Sense of community (or psychological sense of community) is a concept in community psychology and social psychology, as well as in several other research disciplines, such as urban sociology, which focuses on the experience of community rather than its structure, formation, setting, or other features. Sociologist, social psychologists, anthropologists, and others have theorized about and carried out empirical research on community, but the psychological approach asks questions about the individual's perception, understanding, attitude, feelings, etc. about community and his or her relationship to it and to others' participation—indeed to the complete, multifaceted community experience.

(xvii) Four elements of sense of community : There are four elements of “sense of community” according to the McMillan & Chavis theory:

Membership : Membership includes five attributes: boundaries, emotional safety, a sense of belonging and identification, personal investment, a common symbol system

Influence : Influence works both ways: members need to feel that they have some influence in the group, and some influence by the group on its members is needed for group

cohesion.

Integration and fulfillment of needs : Members feel rewarded in some way for their participation in the community.

Shared emotional connection : The “definitive element for true community”, it includes shared history and shared participation (or at least identification with the history).

(xviii)Common Elements of the Ideal Community : Following are the elements of the ideal community to any ideal community.

1.One standard: principle-centered goodness. People seek to live in righteousness, to live by principles with respect for law and order. There is shared trust because of trustworthiness. It's a community of open doors and few locks. Honesty is prized; lying, cheating, and stealing are punished. People willingly adhere to natural laws and correct principles, knowing that lasting solutions to the very real social problems we face will be based on the principles of a shared vision and a synergistic approach.

2.One heart: vision and direction. People in this community place great value on being of one heart—on true obedience, not conformity. They recognize their interdependency. They know that business carries on enormous burden in modern society and that if the social environment is not conducive to business, the economy will suffer. They know that social problems don't stop at the employment door: problems of the community carry over into business. Members acknowledge the interdependency not only between business and the community but also between the profit and non-profit sectors. They use the key to success—connections, connections, connections—to build infrastructure in every area of our society, including government, business, industry, education, and nonprofit entities. They realize that each segment of society has to achieve a certain level of independence before it can reach out and become interdependent; the private victory precedes the public victory.

3.One mind: purpose, mission, and unity, not uniformity; oneness, not sameness. There is a community mission statement. Everyone is involved in developing it over a period of time, so that an ethic and a norm grow around it. It says, “In this community, we care about each other, and so our approach to problem solving is synergistic, not adversarial. We have forums for open communication, dialogue, and synergy.” People value differences, even see them as strengths. They seek first to understand, sincerely, without an intent to manipulate others for personal gain or to close a sale.

4.Economic equality : no poor among them. The principle is that healthy wealthy communities help seek poor communities.

Community Leaders need to :

- 1.have the vision of public plan for community.
2. lead others to join the community.
- 3.recognize member of the community and delegate respo

nsibilities.

4.maintain public order in community and set the stage for growth in faith.

5.inspire in the community a zeal to evangelize, serve and grow.

6.strengthen the unity of the members of the community with each and fostering a “continual interaction” among the members of the community (from Presentation Ministries)

7.welcome and be hospitable to members

8.be sensitive and caring, good and active listeners

9.be clear about the community's relationship with the community

10.be persons of deep prayer and humility

Sociological aspects of community

Since the notion of “community” is a social construct, the nature of “social” is important to understand. What, is the particular thought that holds a community (or any social organization) together? How can individuals be interdependent upon each other, even when they believe they are independent? Do such beliefs, serve some purpose in sustaining or supporting social organization? It is important for the mobilize to note the inter-connections between the cultural dimensions which comprise a community. While social scientists disagree about the precise nature of those inter-connections, all will agree that the basic characteristic of society (and thus of the communities within a society) is that they are interconnected. A community, like other social institutions, is not merely a collection of individual persons; it is a changing set of relationships, including the attitudes and behavior of its members. Remember that your goal is community empowerment. Knowing what a community is, and its social and cultural nature, will help you to know what it is that is becoming empowered by your efforts.

Community culture is Learned : As mentioned above that a community is a cultural organism, and that it was something that went beyond those individual human beings that make it up. Culture in the social sciences is something far more than what we see in society so what is it? Culture consists of all those things, including actions and beliefs which human beings (as physical animals) learn, which make them human. Culture includes learned behavior, but not things which are determined genetically. Culture is stored and transmitted by symbols; never by chromosomes. While some culture is learned in childhood (like how to talk, for example), other culture is learned by adults.

Community culture Transcends its Humans : Culture is superorganic (and a community is cultural). Understanding this concept, “superorganic,” is important in understanding a community. Just as the organic level is based on inorganic (living cells are made up of non living atoms, etc.; a dog or a tree is not a cell even though it is made up of cells), so the superorganic is based on the organic (society is not a human being even though it is made up of human beings). This means that, during animation (mobilization and organization) of a community, the mobilize must always be able to separate what is happening to the overall community itself, in contrast to what is happening to particular

individuals. We use the word “transcend” here to mean “go beyond.” It does not have a religious connotation in this use.

A Community is a Superorganic Organism or System : A community can be seen as being something like an organism (i.e. it is organized; it has organs). It lives and functions even though its human members come and go, are born or die. Just as a living cell, plant or animal, transcends its atoms, so an institution, a behavior pattern, or a community, transcends its individual humans. The behavior of an atom or the life cycle of a molecule happens according to a different set of forces than the living plant or animal in which the atom or molecule is found. So, too, an individual human being is subject to a different set of forces than a social organization (such as a community) where it is found (Mc Millian, 1986). A belief, for example, is believed by living persons, but that belief may live on through other persons long after the first ones die.

Community as network and local social system : As Lee and Newby (1983) point out, the fact that people live close to one another does not necessarily mean that they have much to do with each other. There may be little interaction between neighbors e.g. urban communities. It is the nature of the relationships between people and the social networks of which they are a part that is often seen as one of the more significant aspects of 'community'. The nature of the networks within in particular place or grouping is, thus, of fundamental importance when making judgments about communities' – and the extent to which people can flourish within them. Humans are social animals. Connection and interaction both widen and deepen what we can achieve, and makes possible our individual character. It may even emerge as 'communion'.

Community - norms and habits : Whether people are disposed to engage with one another is dependent upon the norms of a particular society or community – and the extent to which individuals make is used in practice called 'habits of the heart' – and this leads us back to our initial discussion of community as a value. To judge the quality of life within a particular community we, need to explore what shared expectations there are about the way people should behave – and whether different individuals take these on. In this process following aspects are more important.

Tolerance – an openness to others; curiosity; perhaps even respect, a willingness to listen and learn (Walzer 1997).
Reciprocity – Putnam (2000) describes generalized reciprocity thus: 'I'll do this for you now, without expecting anything immediately in return, and perhaps without even knowing you, confident that down the road you or someone else will return the favour'. In the short run there is altruism, in the long run self-interest.
Trust – the confident expectation that people, institutions and things will act in a consistent, honest and appropriate way is essential if communities are to flourish. Closely linked to norms of reciprocity and networks of civic engagement (Putnam 1993; Coleman 1990), social trust – trust in other people – allows people to cooperate and to develop. Humans

have social instincts. They come into the world equipped with predispositions to learn how to cooperate, to discriminate, to commit themselves to be trustworthy, to earn good reputations, to exchange goods and information, and to divide labour.

Fostering community - social capital : The sense of belonging and the concrete experience of social networks can bring significant benefits. However, observes the sense of attachment and quality of social networks varies greatly between the different 'communities'. It could be argued that we should be focusing on enhancing the quality of social networks etc. rather than the creation or strengthening of 'community'. The civil society – and it is central to the arguments of Putnam and others who want to 'reclaim public life'. In other words, interaction enables people to build communities, to commit themselves to each other, and to knit the social fabric.

Basic concepts related to community work : For community organization the organizing agency/ project must be community based, it must originate in a community, must have community members responsible, and have its decisions (policy and executive) made by community members. An outside agency or project that is merely located in a community cannot rightly claim to be community based. Also, consulting with community leaders does not make it community based. There is a difference between community-based and community-located. If an agency sets up a service in a community, then that is community-located. To be called community-based correctly, an activity, construction, service, or organization, must be chosen, selected and controlled by the community as a whole (not just some factions). The important thing is for decision making to be community-based, the decisions must be made inside and by the community of the concepts related to community are as follows.

a. **Community based organization :** A CBO is an organization that has been formed and developed within a community, where the decision making (management and planning) is from the community as a whole (e.g. Gramsabha). An agency that is formed from outside, and has decisions made for it from outside, may be community located, but is not community based.

b. **Community based rehabilitation :** Rehabilitation in this context means physical (biological), emotional or mental rehabilitation (or habilitation) of persons who are disabled by some physical, emotional or mental incapacity. Where rehabilitation is community based, then the decision making and responsibility for the habilitation of those disabled individuals are in the community, and do not originate outside the community.

c. **Community contribution :** When we point out that community participation is not the same thing as community contribution (though many mistakenly assume it is), we also note that both are necessary. While community participation means the decision making that makes any activity community based or community centered, community contribution is necessary to ensure that the community members feel that they own the project, i.e. that they have

invested in it, not just received it. It is recommended that at least the inputs of any community project that is to be supported from the community itself. At first this is often viewed with anxiety and despair from many community members. Then we point out that the donated communal labour alone has to be fairly calculated, and that if they did so, they would be pleasantly surprised at how much value that would add to the community input. The time spent by community members, especially those that sit on the executive committee, deciding and planning the project, is donations of executive and management skills, time and labour. The donated labour should be fairly costed.

(i) Community development : Community development means growing in complexity in all dimensions of culture. It differs from community empowerment which means growing stronger. Although the two are different by definition, they are intricately linked to each other. Community development which is conceived and pushed from outside the community is unlikely to be sustained. If it comes from within a community, it is more likely to be sustained. When a community develops, it grows. It does not necessarily mean getting bigger or getting richer. It means getting more complex and stronger. A community does not get developed by a mobilize any more. A community (as a social institution) develops itself. A mobilize can only stimulate, encourage and guide members of the community. Some people assume that community development simply means getting richer %% an increase in per capita wealth or income. It can be, but is more. It is social change, where a community becomes more complex, adding institutions, increasing its collective power, changing qualitatively in its organization. Community development means growing in complexity in all dimensions of culture. It differs from community empowerment which means growing stronger. Although the two are different by definition, they are intricately linked to each other.

(ii) Community empowerment : To increase capacity of a community is to increase its ability to do things for itself. It is more than just adding some communal services or facilities like roads, sanitation, water, access to education and health care. It means increased ability and strength. It means more skills, more confidence, and more effective organization. It cannot come about by charity or donation of resources from outside. It can be facilitated through action such as community projects, but only when all community members become involved from the beginning, to decide upon a community action, to identify hidden resources from within the community, and by developing a sense of ownership and responsibility of communal facilities from the start to the finish.

(iii) Community management : Community management is aimed at poverty reduction, the strengthening of low income communities in the planning and management of human settlements communal facilities and services, their construction, operation and maintenance. This is training for action, not just for skill transfer or for giving information to individuals. Training, as a method for strengthening low income communities, for poverty reduction, for promoting community participation, for practical support to

democratization and decentralization, is far from being only the transfer of information and skills to the trainees. It also includes mobilizing and organizing.

(iv) Community participation : Community participation is far more than the contribution of labour or supplies; it is participating in decision making, to choose a community project, plan it, implement it, manage it, monitor it, control it. It differs from community contribution. Social Animation promotes the activities of a target community, with a view to the community taking more responsibility for its own development, starting with decisions about what projects to undertake, and stimulation to mobilize resources and organize activities. Community participation promotion aims at ensuring that decisions affecting the community are taken by all (not only a few) community members (not by an outside agency). In the community empowerment methodology, community contribution is encouraged, for it helps the community to become more responsible for the activity if they invest their own resources in it. We also encourage Government, and outside donors to discuss their activities with the whole community; this is community consultation. Community participation here should not be used as the equivalent of community contribution or community consultation (as is misleadingly done by many assistance agencies); participation here means participation in decision making, in control and in co-ordination.

(v) The community nature: First, let us note that a "community" is a construct, a model. We cannot see a whole community, we cannot touch it, and we cannot directly experience it. Like the words "hill" or "river," a community may come in one of many shapes, sizes, colors and locations, no two of which are alike. More importantly, a community is not just the people who are in it. A community usually already existed when all of its current residents were not yet born, and it will likely continue to exist when all of the people in it have left. It is something that is beyond its very components, its residents or community members. A community may have members who have temporarily moved to other locations. They may wish to eventually return, but not all do. A "community" in some senses may not even have a physical location, but be demarcated by being a group of people with a common interest. In the training material here, however, the "community" which is the object of a mobilizer's attention, is usually one with a physical geographic location.

(vi) Community Spirit : Community spirit refers to the ideas that community members have about themselves and their community. They are usually positive attitudes, optimistic about its future, and which encourage altruism and the contribution of members to the welfare of the community. Loyalty is among these attitudes. Those attitudes are then reflected in the behavior of those members, and therefore contribute to the good future of that community. When community members are "spirited" they are not possessed by supernatural beings; but they are active. An important characteristic of a community is that the people are conscious of belonging to it. Their loyalty can be called their community spirit. The concept "community spirit" is not a technical sociological term but it is an important characteristic in the nature essential characteristics of

communities. Where community once meant a group of people, with its own culture and social organization, within a society as a whole, the word for community came to mean the characteristics of communities, informal and personal.

(vii) Community Engagement :The concept of Community Engagement a working definition of community engagement is the process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting the well-being of those people. It is a powerful vehicle for bringing about environmental and behavioral changes that will improve the living conditions of the community and its members. It often involves partnerships and coalitions that help mobilize resources and influence systems, change relationships among partners, and serve as catalysts for changing policies, programs, and practices (Fawcett et al., 1995).

Broad functions of community

From the point of view of functions it performs, the community is considered to be a combination of social units and systems which performs major social functions having locality relevance. Ronald W. Warren discusses community activities under 5 major functions it performs for the individual as well as the community.

- (i) Production distribution consumption.
- (ii) Socialization
- (iii) Social control
- (iv) Participation
- (v) Mutual Support

Although each of these have locality relevance, it does not mean that the community exercises exclusive responsibility of performing these functions nor does it mean that the community has complete control over these functions. A number of other social systems such as informal groups, formal associations and institutions and the whole society also perform these functions. However, the community organizes these functions on a locality- basis. These functions are:

- (i) Production - distribution - consumption : This function has to do with local participation in the process of producing, distributing and consuming those goods and services which are a part of daily living. However, the control of the production and distribution process as well as access to the goods and services produced is often inegalitarian and it reflects the power dynamics in the community. Women's work within the family is never seen as part of this 'production-distribution-consumption' cycle; it remains informal, unrecognized and often unpaid or, Similarly, the access of girls and women to services like education and health is extremely poor in most traditional Indian societies. The switch in the provision of these services from one auspice to another has important implications.
- (ii) Socialization : The function of socialization involves a process by which community or one of its constituent social units transmits prevailing social knowledge, values and

norms to its individual members. It is a process through which a person learns one's roles and functions. It is a process through which social structures are regenerated and maintained. The process of socialization is subtle, insidious and difficult to confront as it relates to the basis of selfhood. Women have traditionally been the carriers of culture from one generation to the other. With this role, the norms, practices and expectations are sought to be preserved. Such association of culture and practice to maintain power structures is also witnessed in the form of the caste system. Transformation of this process involves continual confrontation with self. Yet the key to structural change lies in the questioning and consequent modification of these processes. The family, caste, kinship, religion were the major institutions of socialization in the past. The mass media and formal system are today major agents of socialization.

(iii) Social Control : The function of social control involves the process through which a group influences the behavior of its members toward conformity with its norms. Customarily, formal government has ultimate coercive power over the individual through the enforcement of laws, its organs being the police and the courts. However, many other units including the family, the school, caste, religious organization also play a major role in it. The control exerted by the local community, has diminished significantly with the formal judicial system being firmly entrenched. It is evident that social control is exercised to ensure no 'slip ups' in socialization. Deviants are therefore, punished heavily or criticized. For example, a woman who refuses to 'obey' her husband may be rebuked by the community which is a traditional practice in Indian society. In an unjust society, social control often works in favor of the powerful; challenge in community work is therefore to advance for legislation which is more egalitarian. On the other hand, there are certain progressive legislations whose implementation leaves much to be desired. An example may be of wife abuse where the police refuse to register a case, the challenge is to generate social pressure to implement laws.

(iv) Participation : An important community function is that of providing local access to participation. Such access is often through local institutions - religious, social, economic and political. Such participation is invaluable as it generates self-growth in the participants; it also ensures that institutions meet the needs of people. In traditional communities, kinship - clan Panchayats and village Panchayats were important forums for participation. The post independence era has witnessed increasing centralization of governance with the result that local bodies have become benefit of resources and power. Participation in community affairs may be at several levels. Ordinarily social participation of women is very limited due to problems of confidence and mobility, one implication of this is the need to create more avenues for participation for them. In recent years, one has witnessed the increasing participation of women in their role as community managers, e.g., obtaining ration, accessing basic amenities such as toilets, water-taps or in stopping evictions. We need to be sensitive to whether such participation ensures any real change in their status of whether these avenues reinforce the same gender stereotypes.

(v) Mutual Support : The function of providing local level mutual support is one of the most critical community functions. Traditionally, such mutual support whether in the form of care in time of sickness, the exchange of labor, helping out a family in economic distress have been performed largely by groups like family, relatives, caste, neighborhood groups or local religious groups. Specialization of function, along with social changes has led to a gradual change in auspices for many of these mutual support functions from local groups to governmental or market institutions, this is simultaneously a reflection of weakening ties between people. Today, many scholars believe that it is possible to 'choose' to be a member of a community. The implication of this is that the capacity of communities to care is reducing. Such mutual support is extremely important in initiating groups for social change. The change process cannot be sustained without the booking of a group. Building such supportive networks is a critical community work.

Basic characteristics of the community

(1) Community is a sociological construct: The concept of a community a "construct" (model), it is a "sociological construct." It is a set of interactions, human behaviors that have meaning and expectations between its members. Not just action, but actions based on shared expectations, values, beliefs and meanings between individuals. To understand how a community operates, and how it changes, it is necessary to learn a little bit about sociology the science. The mobilize is an applied scientist; social scientist. While a pure scientist is interested in how things work, the applied scientist is interested in taking that knowledge and getting useful results.

(2) A Community has Fuzzy Boundaries: When an identified community is a little village, separated by a few kilometers from other villages, in a rural area, its boundaries appear at first to be very simple. That pattern of human interaction may be seen as consisting only of relations between the residents living inside that location, inside that village. But its residents interact also with people outside the village. They marry persons from near and far, and may move or bring a spouse in to live with them. At any one time, those village residents may have sisters, brothers, cousins, parents and extended relatives living elsewhere. The boundary of that community is not so precise. There may be communities within larger communities, including districts, regions, ethnic groups, nations and other boundaries. There may be marriages and other interaction that link villages on both sides of national borders.

(3) Some Communities are Special : In urban areas, a community may be a small group of a few homesteads of people from a common origin. That community in turn, may be part of a neighborhood community or other local parts of the main community. As the boundaries become wider, there is more heterogeneity (differences in origin, language, religion or other features that can form a common identity). It may be in turn, a part of a wider community, which in turn may be part of a conglomeration comprising a large village/locality. In general (with exceptions) the community has more fuzzy boundaries, is more difficult to demarcate, is

more heterogeneous (varied, mixed), more complex, and more difficult to organize using standard community development methods, and has more complex and sophisticated goals, than rural communities.

4) Place. Territorial or place community can be seen as where people have something in common, and this shared element is understood geographically. Another way of naming this is as 'locality'. This approach to community has received a rich literature – first in community studies' and more recently in locality studies (often focusing on spatial divisions of labour).

(5) Interest. In interest or 'elective' communities people share a common characteristic other than place. They are linked together by factors such as religious belief, blood relations, occupation or ethnic origin. In this way we may talk about the 'tribal community' or the 'rural community'. Development in what might be called the sociology of identity has played an important role in 'opening out the conceptual space within which non-place forms of community can be understood' (Hoggett 1997). 'Elective groups' and 'intentional communities' are a key feature of contemporary life.

(6) Communion. In its weakest form we can approach this as a sense of attachment to a place, group or idea (in other words, whether there is a 'spirit of community'). In its strongest form 'communion' entails a profound meeting or encounter – not just with other people, but also with God and creation. There is, of course, a strong possibility that these different ways of approaching community will also overlap in particular instances.

(7) Boundary and community :The 'community' involves two aspects related to each other that the members of a group have something in common with each other; and the thing held in common distinguishes them in a significant way from the members of other possible groups (Cohen 1985). Community, thus, implies both similarity and difference. It is a relational idea: 'the opposition of one community to others or to other social entities'. This leads us to the question of boundary – what marks the beginning and end of a community?

It is the fact that the boundaries may be marked on a map as a physical features like a river or road but not all boundaries are so obvious: 'They may be thought of, rather, as existing in the minds of the people' (Cohen 1985). As such they may be seen in very different ways, not only by people on either side, but also by people on the same side. This is the symbolic aspect of community (or communion) boundary and is fundamental to gaining an appreciation of how people experience communities (and communion). An obvious example of this is the sorts of ritual people connect with in terms of religious observance, for example, the rites of worship, the objects involved. Indeed, it is very significant that the notion of community recurs in major religions.

Dimensions of Community

(i) Cultural Dimensions of Community : When we say a community is not the same thing as a human being, we say it does not have emotions, a head, thoughts, legs, or a hobby. It does, however, have different parts to it that apply to social organizations and culture rather than to individual human

beings. One important way to analyze a community, break it into different parts, is to use the six cultural “dimensions.” We use “ dimensions “ because these are analytical categories, made by us human beings, rather than being based upon observable parts (like parts of the body: head, arms, legs). These six cultural dimensions (plus geography and demography) can be used as organizing categories for you to research, observe, and understand the community where you intend to work.

In mathematics, an object has three dimensions, such as height, width, and depth, four if you include time. No matter how small or in what ways you cut up that object, each piece will still have all four dimensions. So too a socio cultural entity, like a community. No matter how small or in what ways you cut up a piece of culture, it will always have all six of its dimensions. These dimensions of community include: 1. Technological, 2. Economic, 3. Political, 4. Institutional (social),

5. Aesthetic-value, and 6. Belief-conceptual.

Each of these dimensions of culture is transmitted by symbols (not genes) and consists of systems of learned ideas and behavior. They are not “aspects” of culture; they are dimensions. Cultural dimensions may vary in size but, by definition, permeate the whole. All of these are systems within every social (or cultural) system. They are based on learned behavior, which transcends the individuals who each learned parts of them. If anyone dimension of culture is missing, by definition, all are missing. You cannot “see” a dimension of culture or society, as you can see an individual person. Every individual manifests each of the six dimensions of culture. To become socially aware, the mobilize must be able to analyze all six of the dimensions, and their interrelationships, even though s/he can only see individuals, not those dimensions.

(ii)The Technological Dimension of Community : The technological dimension of community is its capital, its tools and skills, and ways of dealing with the physical environment. It is the interface between humanity and nature. Remember, it is not the physical tools themselves which make up the technological dimension of culture, but it is the learned ideas and behavior which allow humans to invent, use, and teach others about tools. Technology is much a cultural dimensions as beliefs and patterns of interaction; it is symbolic. Technology is cultural. This cultural dimension is what the economist may call “real capital” (in contrast to financial capital). It is something valuable that is not produced for direct consumption, but to be used to increase production (therefore more wealth) in the future; investments. In capacity development, it is one of the sixteen elements of strength that changes (increases) as an organization or a community becomes stronger. In the war against poverty, technology provides an important set of weapons.

(iii) The Economic Dimension of Community : The economic dimension of community is its various ways and means of production and allocation of scarce and useful goods and services (wealth), whether that is through gift giving, obligations, barter, market trade, or state allocations.

It is not the physical items like cash which make up the economic dimensions of culture, but the ideas and behavior which give value to cash (and other items) by humans who have created the economic systems they use. Wealth is not merely money, just as poverty is not merely the absence of money. Wealth is one of the important elements of community strength or organizational capacity. When the organization or community has more wealth (that it can control as an organization or community) then it has more power and more ability to achieve the things it wants to achieve. Over the broad course of human history, the general trend in economic change has been from simple to more complex. One system did not immediately replace another, but new systems were added, and less useful ones slowly disappeared out.

(iv) The Political Dimension of Community : The political dimension of community is its various ways and means of allocating power, influence and decision making. It is not the same as ideology, which belongs to the values dimension. It includes, but is not limited to, types of governments and management systems. It also includes how people in small groups or informal groups make decisions when they do not have a recognized leader.

(v) The Institutional Dimension of Community : The social or institutional dimension of community is composed of the ways people act, interact between each other, react, and expect each other to act and interact. It includes such institutions as marriage or friendship, roles such as mother or police officer, status or class, and other patterns of human behavior. The institutional dimension of society is what many non sociologists first think about when they hear “sociology.” It is only one of six dimensions of social organization (culture), however. The dimension has to do with how people act in relation to each other, their expectations, their assumptions, their judgments, their predictions, their responses and their reactions. It looks at patterns of relationships sometimes identified as roles and status, and the formation of groups and institutions that derive from those patterns.

(vi) The Aesthetic-Values Dimension of Community : The aesthetic-value dimension of community is the structure of ideas, sometimes paradoxical, inconsistent, or contradictory, that people have about good and bad, about beautiful and ugly, and about right and wrong, which are the justifications that people cite to explain their actions. The three axes along which people make judgments are all dependent upon what they learn from childhood. These include judging between right and wrong, between good and bad, and between beautiful and ugly, all based upon social and community values. They are not acquired through our genes, but through our socialization. That implies that they can be relearned; that we could change our judgments.

(vii) The Beliefs-Conceptual Dimension of Community : The belief-conceptual dimension of community is another structure of ideas, also sometimes contradictory, that people have about the nature of the universe, the world around them, their role in it, cause and effect, and the nature of time, matter, and behavior. This dimension is sometimes thought to be the religion of the people. It is a wider category, and also includes atheistic beliefs, for example, that man created God in his

own image. It includes shared beliefs in how this universe came to be, how it operates, and what is reality. It is religion – and more. When you drop a pencil onto the floor, you demonstrate your belief in gravity. When you say the sun comes up in the morning (it does not; the earth turns) you express your world view.

SUMMARY

To summaries the paper it is to state that theoretical base of community is given in detailed. The concern of community work in professional social work is discussed the in detailed. The roots of human behaviour is deeply rooted in community as the bahaviour is highly influenced by the local culture and every community has its own culture where every individual develops web of social relations for meeting his social needs. The method of social work has its own premises in community work is illustrated in detailed. The present scenario has the communities being influenced by technology, communication, mass media which has direct bearing on human problem is discussed the in detailed. The concept community and its dimensions are also explained in detailed. The social functions of community for well-being of individual are also explained in detailed. The essential elements of community and its relevance to social work helps in understanding how effective community work can solve the social problems. The sociological aspect of community work states that that in any society, in any community, in any institution, in any interaction between individuals, there is an element of culture, and that includes something of each of those six cultural dimensions. All of these are learned from birth. The new-born child is like an animal, not yet a human being, but he or she begins learning culture (humanizing) immediately (for example, when drinking from the breast) by interacting with other humans, and thus starts becoming human. (Many say that this humanizing process begins in the womb). This process of learning, and thus of becoming, continues until death. If you are not learning, you are dead. When you are at a community meeting, when you are in a classroom, when you meet someone face to face, wherever you are, you are part of culture, part of the sociocultural system, and you can find all six dimensions.

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