Joint International Research Project

# (Professional) Social Work and

# its Functional Alternatives

【ソーシャルワークの第３ステージ、グローバルプロフェッション化に関する研究】

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# Introduction
## SOCIAL WORK≠PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORK
## SOCIAL WORK AS AN ENTITY IN A SOCIETY
## Understanding in the eyes of people in communities

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**A Flaw in the IFSW/IASSW International Definition of Social Work**

<Social work≠Professional social work>

The urgency for this publication comes from a need to contribute to the debate over the revision of the IFSW-IASSW's International Definition of Social Work that is currently taking place in the international social work community.   Among the claims put forth is the refusal of the equation that social work=professional social work, and the inclusion of the views of people in communities, not only of professional social workers.

The current international definition of social work has been well thought out and constructed based on our predecessors' practices, deliberations, and efforts--except for one critical flaw: the title is "the definition of social work," and the body begins with "The profession of social work promotes…." While it states that it will give the definition of social work, it has given the definition of the social work profession. Few people have detected this gap. Only placing social work itself equal to the social work profession closes the gap. Justification for this equation could only come from the fact that the definition is for one's own self from the eyes of the social work profession or "social work developed" countries—those where the profession has been firmly established.

"What is social work?"—"It's a profession." Almost all professors and practitioners repeat the same answer in the social work developed countries; they do the same     even in social work developing countries, where most of the leading professors and teaching staff have been educated and trained in Western developed countries, and most of their schools have adopted curricula and textbooks from those Western countries with or without some minor modifications. Their students are also expected to repeat the same training.

<Social work wants to serve all people in the world>

There are some 200 countries on the earth. The overwhelming majority of these countries at best have only a few professional social workers. Those regions have a huge number of difficulties and problems in their peoples' lives, social needs, and social problems, as is true in the social work developed countries. How can those societies tackle these challenges? One answer is to produce a

huge number of professional social workers immediately. Another is to import professional social workers from social work developed countries where professional social workers exist. The former is difficult to be realized within 5 or 10 years; the latter would spontaneously give rise to a stance of "social work colonialism."

As long as we stick to the equation above, the vast majority of people and communities in the world will never enjoy the benefits of social work, and we, the social workers, will be unable to serve them.

Even without professional social workers, however, in all societies, some segments have taken care of those difficulties and problems and people who are suffering. If this were not true, the societies could not sustain themselves. Not only families and kindred and neighbors, but also village heads, lords and rulers, people of religion, humanists and philanthropists, warm-hearted people, governmental employees, and NGO staff existed before professional social workers were born in the process of industrialization. All social work history textbooks spare many pages for descriptions of those persons' work and dedication. Today those people, as well as others, are still here, doing the similar or even the same work as that of professional social workers. Aren't they social workers? Isn't what they are doing social work?

**Functional Alternatives**

<The research structure>

The aim of this research is to know how social work as a social entity is seen in the eyes of people in communities, not a self-definition of professional social work by those who call themselves professional social workers. Cambodia, Fiji, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Sri Lanka compose the scope of our research team. The research design is simple. In Chapter One, describe, empirically, what professional social workers are actually doing and how they are doing this in each country. In Chapter Two, where there are no professional social worker, record, empirically, who is filling such a role and how that is being done. We now tentatively name them functional alternatives.[1] They may or may not be called or perceived as social workers. They themselves may or may not call or perceive themselves as social workers. [2] But mere naming and perception don't matter here;[3] we intend to determine both commonalities and differences between professional social workers and their functional alternatives through comparative analyses in Chapter Three.

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[1] In the eyes of works of people in communities, professional social workers may be named as their functional alternative.

[2] Reference to para- and semi-professional social workers may be avoided in this research to keep the discussion simpler as it is the grouping of and naming to workers whose qualifications are not high enough in the eyes of professional social workers.

[3] One's self-perception as a social worker may matter when defining what a social worker is.

<The term "professional">

The reality is not simple to tackle. Each country has its own history and tradition and uses different languages and different terminologies, for example, even for the English term "social work." The meanings may not necessarily be identical to each other. The definition of key terms, i.e. professional social work(ers), functional alternatives, and social work(ers), was left in the hands of each team. For example, "professional" is defined by qualification, but there are three different aspects: 1) the quality or level of services workers provide,[4] 2) the level and content of education and/or registration/certificate/license workers receive, and 3) the form of employment workers serve in.  It is professional social workers who satisfy one of these qualifications. Professional social workers must be equipped with a certain high quality and level of services to offer, must have obtained a certain level of education and training and/or certification or licensing, or must be engaged in their work as a job, for money, or for making a living. A profession presumes to be an occupation. The former is a classification of the latter according to International or National Standards of Occupation Classifications.

Qualifications 1, 2 and 3 are not necessarily compatible, both logically and in reality. The quality and level of services provided by professional social workers defined by qualifications 2 or 3 are generally high enough, but still this is an assumption (cf. qualification 1). Professional social workers defined by qualifications 1 or 3 may lack the qualification for 2. Professional social workers defined by qualifications 1 and 2 may work as volunteers who do not satisfy qualification 3.


<Social work in the eyes of lay people>

Let's listen to people in communities. They do not even know what social work or social workers are at all, and often identify social workers as those people mentioned above--people of religion and warm-hearted men and women, or have their own image, understanding, perception and/or definition of social work(ers), finding core elements among them such as altruism, a sense of caring, and compassion which modern professional social work has lost somewhere. People in communities know who can assist them how they can do that.

The quality and level of services provided by professional social workers are generally assumed to be higher and more scientific, programmatic, and systematic, e.g. in the cycle of assessment, intervention and evaluation, than those provided by functional alternatives. However, those services provided by workers who have not satisfied educational and registration/certificate/license qualifications, or are engaged in work as volunteers, are sometimes as good as or even better than those provided by professional social workers. Such cases can be observed every day in agencies,

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[4] The term "competency" may be avoided because it could be "the legal power of a court of law to hear and judge something in court or of a government to do something" and "the ability and skill to do what is needed." (*Longman Advanced American Dictionary*)

communities and disaster areas. The degree of the effectiveness of interventions of and the satisfaction of consumers with services by functional alternatives, or non-professional social workers, may often be higher than services by professional social workers.

Football is football. There is professional football and non-professional football. Still it is football whether professional players play in a grand stadium or even if small kids play it in back alleys. Professional football players usually play better than non-professional players. But sometimes some non-professional teams beat professional teams. Only by being based on and rooted in the vast expanse of the earth or sea of football, if you will, can professional football become stronger and prosperous. This is also the case with social work. Social work is social work. It could be professional and non-professional. Without a vast expanse of the earth or sea of social work, professional social work can never become rich in nature and prosperous.

In this research, we hope that the distinction between professional social work and social work is made, commonalities and differences of professional social work and its functional alternatives determined, and the essence of social work extracted. Summaries and preliminary analysis by our Coordinator comes first and full reports by all teams from the five countries will follow. We express deep appreciation to them all for their sincere involvement and their anticipated achievement.

Can professional social workers define social work? Professional social workers can define themselves, i.e. professional social work(ers), and also can observe and interpret social work.

# Contents

（Professional）Social Work and Its Functional Alternatives:
"Social Work" by Non-Social Workers

Summary and Analysis

Ayako Sasaki, MSW, PhD.

*Is the equation "Social Work=Professional Social Work" correct? "What is social work?" is an obsolete question, but also a cutting-edge one. To obtain an in-depth understanding of "what is social work" from a global perspective, we created an international joint project that aimed to elucidate "(professional) social work" in each collaborative country and identify its "functional alternative works" if there are few or even no professional social workers in a community.*

Tatsuru Akimoto, 5th November, 2012[1].

We posted a "call for participation" on the APASWE website in June 2012 and received ten proposals from seven countries. After careful review and strict evaluation, the research project admission team at ACWelS accepted six proposals from five countries. We also considered accepting two other proposals from one country with the condition that the two applicants submitted one proposal as a team. However, the discussion between the two groups did not end in success despite their sincere efforts, and both dropped from the process. The eventual participants were six member teams from five countries:, Cambodia, Fiji, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka had two member teams: one focused on professional social work, and the other on functional alternatives in special circumstances.

The research aims:

(1) To observe and record what (professional) social workers are doing.

(2) To observe and record who is doing similar work in communities where there are no or few professional social workers.

(3) To conduct a comparative analysis between (1) and (2).

We expected that the research findings might reveal what social work is, what "professional" social work is, and what "professional" social work has left behind.

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[1] We had a meeting for interim research reports on the 4th to 6th of November 2012 in Tokyo as a part of the Asia Pacific Social Work Seminar of the Japan College of Social Work, which took place on the 3rd to 5th of November 2012.

On 5 November 2012, we had a meeting in Tokyo for interim reports. Based on the discussions and ideas shared there, member teams proceeded with their research in each country. The deadline for the final paper was 1 February 2013; this report contains their final papers. The opinions or points of view expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position of the head of the research project, the editor, ACWels, or the APASWE. We value the original reports and tried not to edit them except for obvious misspellings and typos. We have not even unified the definitions and usage of key words, such as professional social work and functional alternatives. The report from Sri Lanka is unique, since we had two teams from the country that were very different in nature and had very different views on social work. Although the reports do not provide a consistent perspective on the country, their different views give us interesting and thought-provoking results. We appreciate all the members' hard work and sincere commitment to the research.

## Summary of the Research Findings

**How to Distinguish (Professional) Social Workers from their Functional Alternatives**

**1) Professional Social Workers' View**

 **"Education" as a key component of "professional" social work**

How do we distinguish (professional) social work from "social work- like" activities and practices? In this research, we have called such activities and practices "functional alternatives". We asked each team to define (professional) social work and "social work- like" activities/practices in their own way (see, Figure 1).

The findings indicate that all the member teams, except the one from Fiji, distinguish (professional) social workers from functional alternative workers by <u>education</u>. In the case of Fiji, professional social work is beginning to be distinguished by education, but there are many people who are considered social workers who do not have a university level bachelor's degree. Most teams seem to believe that a bachelor's degree in social work is required to call someone a "professional" social worker (see, Figure 2). For example, people who completed high school level of social work education are not enough to be called as "professional" social workers even when they have working experiences in social work settings in Indonesia; they are "assistant" of social workers. According to the Regulation of the Minister of Social Affairs no 16/2012 on Certification of Professional Social Worker and Welfare Worker, both professional social worker and welfare worker were divided into 3 categories; assistant, generalist and specialist.

While assistant social workers demonstrate competence in helping social workers, they are not "professional" social workers. In Malaysia, presently the Department of Social Welfare is the largest agency that employs social work "professionals"; hiring is based on the recognition that a person has a bachelor's degree in social work, although only one-third of more than 3,000 employees there are actually trained and involved in social work practice. Additionally, in Malaysia, the cabinet approved the Social Workers Act in 2010, creating four types of social workers: associate social worker, social worker, specialist social worker, and clinical social worker. Although the positions will be regulated by the Act and licensed nationally, an "associate social worker" who has not earned a bachelor's degree in social work seems to be considered a "semi-professional," and is not fully recognised as a "professional" social worker.

In Sri Lanka, diploma holders in any discipline who are actually providing social work or social welfare services are recognised as "para-professional" social workers, although the National Institute of Social Development, which functions under the purview of the Ministry of Social Services, is the only place that provides formal social work education in Sri Lanka to produce "professional" social workers. In fact, the Sri Lanka Association for Professional Social Workers allows social work diploma holders as well as social work bachelor's and higher degree holders to get full membership while only allowing "para-professional" social workers holding diplomas in any other disciplines with more than three years experiences to become associate members. It seems that a bachelor's degree is desirable and expected for "professional" social workers, but social work diploma holders could be recognised as "professional" in reality. On the other hand, from the view of "functional alternatives," the social work education that the institute provides does not seem designed to train "professional" social workers, but is based on the social welfare agenda of the Sri Lankan government. While admitting that "education" is essential for any kind of professional, "functional alternatives" in Sri Lanka, such as Buddhist monks, actually provide their "social work" services beyond the boundaries of the legal, administrative, and industrial social work norms that the government is based on.

Cambodia is another country that has few "professional" social workers when "professionals" are defined as having a bachelor's level of social work education; the Department of Social Work at the Royal University of Phnom Penh was established by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) in 2008, and the first class of 22 undergraduate students with bachelor's degrees in social work graduated in June 2012. In Cambodia, at any point in time, approximately one dozen foreigners with social work degrees may be present in the country, functioning as advisors, consultants or managers. There are less than a

dozen professionally trained local social workers who have gone abroad for their graduate degrees. In contrast, over 500 international and 3,430 local NGOs are presently providing social and human services and perform functions that likely would be defined as "social work." However, they are not recognised as "professional" social workers only because of a lack of formal social work training and education.

The Fijian team was the only one that did not see social work education as the current main indicator of a "professional" social worker. However, it recognised the importance of social work education. The University of the South Pacific (USP) began a Bachelor of Arts programme with a major in Social Work in 2007, and it is emerging that the main qualifications for a "professional" social worker are a social work degree at the bachelor's level and membership in the Fiji Association of Social Workers. The Fijian team also distinguished "professional" social work from its functional alternatives by "occupation"; "professional" social work is paid employment. One team from Sri Lanka also recognised "professional" social work as referring to the classification of Sri Lankan jobs. The other team from Sri Lanka, however, criticised the current social work educational system and "professional" social workers in Sri Lanka, indicating that social work should not be a "job" that can be time-restricted, government power-oriented, and/or motivated by payment.

**Figure 1. Definition of "Social Work" or "Social Worker" in Each Member's Country**

| Country | Who Defines | Definition |
|---|---|---|
| **Cambodia** | Department of Social Work at the Royal University of Phnom Penh | (Following the IFSW/IASSW's international definition of social work) The social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work. |
| | People interviewed in Phnom Penh | 1) Work that helps vulnerable populations who are in need of support or assistance; 2) Any kind of work that makes society better; 3) Something related to medical practitioners and traditional healers; 4) Tasks or activities undertaken by different sectors of the government; 5) Work for the betterment of poor people that strives to make society equal for all citizens. Few identify that social workers do research to study the root causes of existing social problems. |
| **Fiji** | The Fiji Association of Social Workers | (Code of ethics) This code is based on the fundamental values of the social work profession that include the worth, dignity, and uniqueness of all persons as well as their rights and opportunities. Social work promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships, and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance their well-being. |
| | Empower Pacific (NPO that has criteria to hire their "social workers") | Social work is the profession committed to the pursuit of social justice, to the enhancement of the quality of life and to the development of the full potential of each individual, group, and community in society (this definition is quoted from the Australian Association of Social Workers' definition). |
| **Indonesia** | Indonesian Association of Social Work/Social Welfare Education | Social work is defined as a helping profession for promoting social change, empowerment, and problem solving within human interactions and environments at the level of individual, family, group, community, and society to enhance welfare. Social work intervention is based on theories of human behaviour in social environments, diversity, human rights, and social justice principles, as well as the socio-economic cultural context and the dynamics of local-national-global interactions. |
| | Law no 11/2009 | A Professional Social Worker is someone who works in both government and private institutions who has the competence, social work educational background, and concern for social work obtained through education, training, and/or experience in social work practice to perform the duties of care and treatment of social problems. |
| **Sri Lanka** | The National Institute of Social Development (NISD) | The social work profession promotes social change, helps to improve human relationships within the cultural contexts of society, and empowers people to enhance their wellbeing and utilise evidence-based knowledge derived from research and practice. The principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work to promote peace and harmony. |
| | Buddhist monks (Team as Functional Alternatives) | Social work professionals should have occupational knowledge of ideology, social systems, and social transformation based on the normal three tier structure of case work, group work, and community organisations. |

**Figure 2: How to distinguish between (professional) social work and functional alternatives (from the "professional" perspective)**

| Indicator \ Country | Cambodia | Fiji | Indonesia | Malaysia | Sri Lanka |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **QUALIFICATIONS** | | | | | |
| **Social Work Education** | ● | (●) | ● | ● | ● |
| Minimum Level of Degree | Bachelor's | Bachelor's emerging | Bachelor's | Bachelor's | Bachelor's desirable (diploma acceptable) |
| **Membership** | | ● | ● | ● | (●) |
| Name of association | | Fiji Association of Social Workers | Indonesia Association of Professional Social Worker | Malaysian Association of Social Workers | Sri Lanka Association for Professional Social Workers |
| **License** | | | ● | ● | |
| Legislation | | | Law no 11/2009 and Regulation of Minister of Social Affairs no 16/2012 | Social Workers Act (approved) | |
| Authorised by | | | Indonesian Agency of Social Worker Certification | Malaysian Social Work Council | |
| **Experiences and Education** | | | (●) | ● | (●) |
| Semi-professional or Para-professional social workers, Recognised as | | | Assistant of Social Worker (from high school to Diploma 3 level in social work education with the minimum of 3 years of experiences in practice) | Associate Social Worker (diploma or bachelor's in other discipline with more than 3 years practice experience in a social work setting) | Para-Professionals (diploma holders in other discipline providing social welfare services) |
| **OCCUPATION** | | ● | ● | | ● |
| **List of Job Classifications** | | | | | ● |
| **Paid-Employment** | | ● | ● | | |

**2) Functional Alternatives' Views**

 **<u>Social change, compassion, and wisdom are necessary for social work in Sri Lanka</u>**

   In this research, one team from Sri Lanka was specifically made up of functional alternative workers: Buddhist monks. The team researched how their value systems, teachings, and doctrines are incorporated into their social work-like practices, and how they function as social workers in the community. The team repeatedly addressed the importance of the component of "social change" in social work, because social change is necessary for social development in Sri Lanka from their perspective. The team criticised the current social work education in Sri Lanka, because it only maintains society's welfare based on the political agenda of the government. The team thought that Buddhism-based functional alternative social work education creates socially responsible, culturally adoptable, and environmentally friendly social workers who change the thinking patterns and the behaviours of people and the community.

   In addition, the team stated that compassion should represent one of the basic principles of the social work profession, including charity, love, kindness, and tolerance. Social workers must develop compassion in addition to intellectual ability, and the team concluded that monks in Sri Lanka combine both.

**<u>Personal or social characteristics are more important than technical skills in Cambodia</u>**

   In Cambodia, the team conducted a focus group discussion with functional alternative workers who mainly work at NGOs in order to find out what kind of qualifications they have, how they perceive their work, and/or whether or not they distinguish their work from "social work." In the discussion, respondents agreed that prior experience in a relevant field would allow someone to be a more skillful worker. However, when discussing necessary qualifications for working with the issues that they themselves work with, most respondents focused on the personal or social characteristics of the person rather than on their technical skills, training, or degrees. In general, most discussed how a person should have certain values or attitudes, such as high morality, a strong commitment to help people, respect and value for others, the capability to consider the interests of other people, open-mindedness, a sense of justice, and a consideration for human dignity and equity. Additionally, they agreed that the person should be flexible, kind, and creative.

**3) General Public's Views**

<u>**Social work is to help vulnerable populations; to make society better; equal to traditional healing; and synonymous with public social welfare for Cambodians in general.**</u>

The Cambodian team conducted a survey and interviewed a total of 183 respondents at different public locations in Phnom Penh to find out how the public understands "social work." Almost 41% of the respondents responded that they did not know what social work means, while the rest expressed their understanding of social work in different ways. Four types of perceptions were found. First, social work is viewed as work that helps vulnerable populations who are in need of support or assistance; social work deals with social issues, such as people with disabilities, poverty, unemployment, the elderly, veterans, drug abuse or human trafficking. Secondly, people categorise social work as any kind of work that makes society better, including managing the development of the country, developing human resources, and ensuring social order, human rights, and social justice. Thirdly, social work is seen as something related to medical practitioners and traditional healers. Lastly, respondents reported that social work is a task or activity undertaken by different sectors of the government; this suggests that there is a perception that social work is synonymous with public social welfare. Respondents also perceived that social workers work for the betterment of poor people and strive to make society equal for all citizens.

<u>**Social workers are perceived as people who work for free for the public in Indonesia**</u>

The team in Indonesia also conducted interviews with the general public to learn about their views on professional social workers. They found that people do not know that there is a profession called social work, and therefore, they do not distinguish professional social work from non-social work. One respondent said, "Social workers are usually people who do work for free for the public, such as volunteers or community leaders (the religious and customary leaders or , traditional healers) who reach out to the surrounding people, for example, when there is a health problem, consulting personal problems, making a decision about the best wedding date, etc." For them, a doctor who renders free medical treatment for the poor, helps disaster victims, or organizes an income generation program for the poor is a social worker. The criterion for them to recognize social workers seems to be dedication to help people.

**4) Differences Found between (Professional) Social Workers and Their Functional Alternatives**

**Community-based alternatives make people take more responsibility for their own decision-making than professional social work in Fiji.**

The team from Fiji saw a distinction between professional social workers and their functional alternatives at the level of community involvement and participation. In community-based alternatives, the people of the community take responsibility for their own decision-making. In professional social work, community participation is through the invitation of the organisation providing the service or, in the case of the Fiji Poverty Benefit Scheme, limited to those who qualify for the scheme after an assessment by welfare officers on specific criteria set by the Department.

**Functional alternatives are as committed to social work ethics and values as professional social workers, and client satisfaction is higher for the services provided by functional alternative workers in Malaysia.**

In Malaysia, the team studied the level of education, work ethics and values, intervention and evaluation methods of workers, clients' perceptions of the services rendered, and the satisfaction levels of service recipients both with professional social workers who are recruited from the Department of Social Welfare and functional alternative workers who work at NGOs. The survey found that generally professional social workers have a higher educational level than functional alternative workers, but that this education is not related to formal social work education, such as BSW or MSW. In other areas as well, there were not significant differences between professional social workers and functional alternative workers. However, the findings indicate that functional alternative workers are as committed to social work ethics and values as professional social workers during their interventions, and client satisfaction is slightly higher for the former despite their lack of professional procedures. Their altruism leads to a commitment to give the best help that they can to their clients, and their adherence to their respective religious values is instrumental in their dedication to serve the needy.

**Social worker employs social work process, values and code of ethics, while functional alternatives use other intervention strategy and spiritual /cultural guidance in Indonesia**

Although Indonesian people in general do not distinguish "professional" social workers with functional alternatives as the "professional" side tries to do by education, the Indonesian research team identify

some distinctions between social workers and alternative workers in four aspects based on their gathered data; function, educational background, intervention strategy, and nature of strategy.

**Figure 3: Distinction of Professional Social Worker and its Functional Alternative Worker**

| | PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORKER | FUNCTIONAL ALTERNATIVE WORKER |
|---|---|---|
| Function | Professional Social Worker | • Welfare Worker (Tenaga Kesejahteraan Sosial <br> • Volunteer <br> • Customary and Religious Leaders, Traditional Healer (community leaders) |
| Educational Background | Minimum: Diploma (level 4) or Undergraduate from Social Work/Welfare Study | • Welfare Worker: graduate from other field of science like <br>   • social: antropology; sociology; politics <br>   • psychology <br>   • engineering <br>   • medicine <br> • Volunteer: formal education, nonformal educationl (training), no formal education <br> • Community Leaders: no formal education and formal education |
| Nature of Intervention | Planned change throughsocial work methods, applying social work principles and process/ phases, with social work values and code of ethics | Welfare Worker: using other social intervention strategies. <br> Volunteer : based on experiences, altruism. <br> Community Leaders: spiritual-base, local wisdom |
| Intervention Strategy | Core Intervention: <br> • Micro (casework, family intervention) <br> • Mezzo (groupwork, organizational level) <br> • Macro (community, policy) | Welfare Worker: Psychosocial counseling, medical treatment, etc <br> Volunteer: Supportive intervention and administration <br> Community Leaders: Spiritual and cultural guidance |

Source: The Indonesian team headed by Ms. Fentiny Nugroho. See page 70.

**Functional alternatives, Buddhist monks, are working under a traditional value system and accepted teachings, and on inherited duties with majority accepted beliefs and perceptions in Sri Lanka.**

The following is a comparison of professional social work and Buddhist practice made by the Sri Lankan team headed by Mr. Anuradha Wickramashinghe. It should be understood in the context of Sri Lanka, but may contain very thought-provoking messages for us to reconsider "what is social work" in a

global context.

**Figure 4: Similarities and Differences between Professional Social Work and its Functional Alternatives**

| Professional social work | Functional alternative |
|---|---|
| Maintaining social welfare of the state | Working for social change |
| Working under legislative framework | Working under traditional value system and accepted teachings |
| Stand for political social welfare with legislative base | Stand for historical assignment with community base |
| Working on assigned duties in the job description | Working on inherited duties with majority accepted believes and perceptions |
| Working for salary and income Result- oriented and limited time frame | Voluntary work result-oriented, full time |
| Command to people with state authority and working on vocational norms | Command to people with spiritual relationships, spiritual guidance, and working on perceptions |
| Strategy- case work, group work and community organisations with legislative and administrative leadership | Strategy- case work, group work and community organisations with spiritual and traditionally accepted leadership |
| Working in tertiary discipline with academic background | Working in spiritual discipline with academic background |
| No ability to influence for political agenda | Ability to Influence for political agenda |
| Responsibility to higher authority on job, solutions on paper and referred to next | Socially responsible and solutions are tangible |

**Source: The Sri Lankan team headed by Mr. Anuradha Wickramasinghe. See, page 141.**

**5) Who plays where? Three Dimensions of "Professional" Social Work: Sri Lanka's Case**

Ms. Vasdevan from Sri Lanka, whose research focused on professional social work, extracts three dimensions that the current "professional" social work is concerned with, and shows the interconnection and relationships among them in the following diagram. Analysing the current situation in Sri Lanka, she concluded that these three dimensions are mainly underpinned by different actors. "Knowledge" is disseminated and sustained by BSW/MSW holders to produce "professional" social workers based on Western scientific theory combined with local and cultural knowledge in Sri Lanka. "Skills," which seem to be developed mainly through experiences of providing social work or welfare services to clients in practice, are accumulated by "para-professional" social workers who hold diplomas from other disciplines. Finally, "attitude," which could also be considered "values and ethics," in professional social work practice might be distinctive from faith-based social workers.

**Figure 5: Three dimensions of social work dealt by three different actors**



Professional Social workers

Knowledge

Western Scientific Theory/
Local Cultural context based
professional social work

para- professional
work with basic
training on working
with people .

Skills

Para-professional
social workers

faith based social work
with compassion and
charity, Services to
God

Attitude

Faith/ Spritual - based
social workers

**Source: The Sri Lankan member, Ms. Varathagowry Vasdevan. See page 112.**

**Analysis of the Findings**

What kind of lessons have we learned from the research findings? Are we able to answer questions such as what social work is, what "professional" social work is, and what "professional" social work has left behind? While we have not found exact answers yet, the six reports from five countries in the Asia Pacific region give us two discussion points that might lead to the answers through further discussion: 1) why and how do people seek help? and 2) why and how do professional social workers try to help people solve their problems?

**1) Why and how do people seek help?**

**People seek help because they want to solve their problems**

It might seem too obvious to ask why people seek help, but we should consider the question's meaning here again. Generally speaking, when people have a problem, they want to solve it. They may try to solve it by themselves, or they may seek help from friends. Sometimes they may seek help from "functional alternative workers," and sometimes they may seek help from "professional" social workers.

Several teams reported that people in their society do not even know that there is a profession called "social worker". Also, some state that people do not distinguish "professional" social workers from functional alternative workers, those who provide social welfare services for the government, or from NGO workers, traditional healers, or religious leaders in the community, according to each team's definitions. In these situations, people probably do not care whether the person who helps them is a "professional" social worker or not. The most important thing for them may be whether the person can actually help them solve their problem or not, as the Indonesian team indicated in their report. If their problem cannot be solved easily, then the important thing might be whether they feel "comfortable" in the process of getting some supports from a helper. Malaysia reported that client satisfaction is slightly higher for functional alternative workers despite of their lack of professional procedures, and the team gave a possible explanation for this result, pointing out that the altruistic value imbedded in functional alternatives might have led to their commitment to give their best to the clients, and clients were satisfied with those attitudes as well as their outcomes.

Knowing the level of client satisfaction would be important to improve practice, but we also know that clients' demands or wants do not automatically become "needs" that require intervention from "professional" social workers. Discussion point would be whether we should still insist that the

"professional" procedure is more important than solving a problem without any systematic procedures and gaining client satisfaction. If we say "yes," then we may have to explain why and prove it empirically.

### Who seems a plausible option to solve their problem?

Several teams reported that "professional" social workers and functional alternative workers work on the same kind of problem areas, such as poverty, disabilities, or child abuse. However, usually people in each society choose who they consult with when they have a problem, depending on the types of problems that they have.

"Problems" that people tend not to consult with professional social workers about can be categorised into three types: 1) a problem that they perceive *is not severe enough* to consult with a professional social worker, 2) a problem that they perceive *is not appropriate* to consult with a professional social worker, and 3) a problem that they perceive *not to be solvable* by a professional social worker. "Professional" social workers are not almighty. So, what is our role as "professional" social workers when people do not seem to value "professionals"?
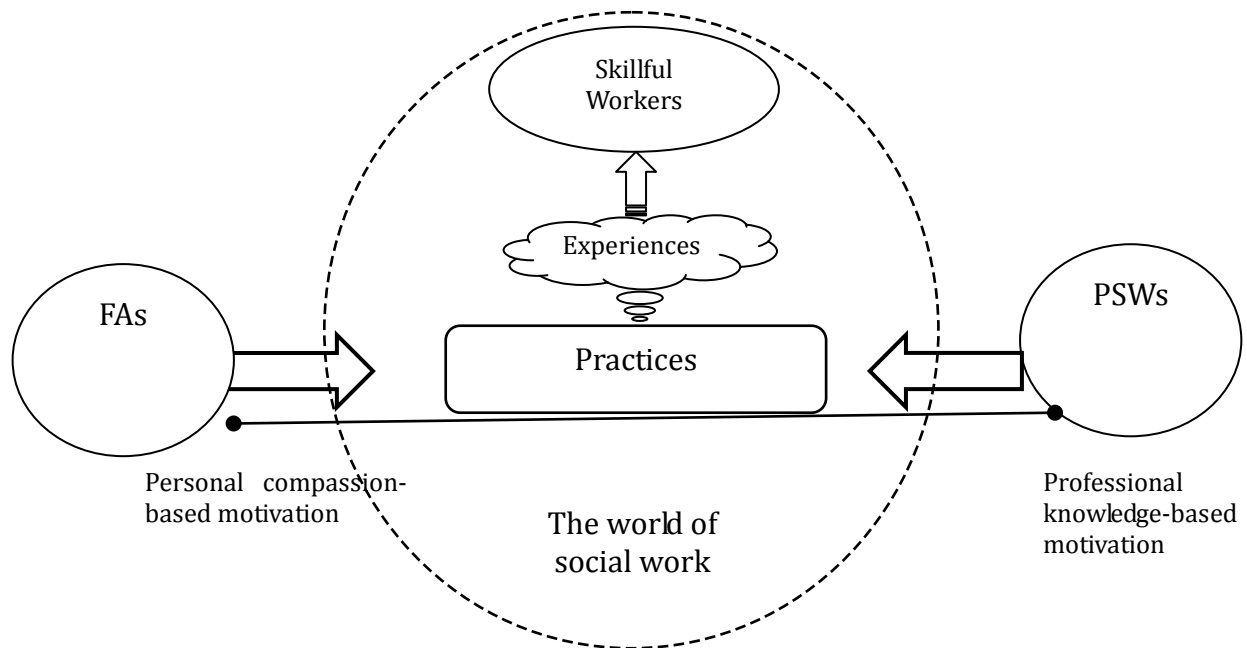
### 2) Why and how do professional social workers try to help people solve their problems?
### Motivation and justification to provide services: compassion-based or knowledge-based

Although it is often asked how a professional social worker should help people, we might not have enough opportunities to consider *why* we help people. Is it because it is our job, or is it because she or he is seeking help from us? Maybe it is because it is "the right thing to do" according to our values and ethics. Or it may be because of the teachings of our religions. Whether you are "professional" or not, you may have some kind of basic feelings, reasons, and justifications for helping others.

The six research reports indicate common points or typical descriptions of "professional" social workers and their functional alternatives. "Professional" social workers tend to be described with terms such as knowledge, formal education, training, qualifications, systematic, (social work) skills, payment, job, government, and/or policy. On the other hand, "functional alternatives" tend to be described with terms such as compassion, charity, traditional healing, religious, faith-based, social and communication skills, free services, volunteer, community, and/or social change.

**Figure 6. Relationship between professional social workers and their functional alternatives**



Created by Ayako Sasaki.

Figure 6 may show the current relationship between professional social workers and their functional alternatives in "the world of social work." "Professional" social workers tend to enter the world from the side of knowledge, whereas functional alternatives do so from the side of compassion. They gain experience from each of their practices and become skillful workers. Personal compassion may be a greater motivation or justification for the work of functional alternatives, whereas professional social works may be motivated by professional knowledge-based compassion, or even what could be said to be a "mission."

**Professional social workers may have to focus more on changing social norms**

The functional alternative team in Sri Lanka repeatedly argued the importance of the concept of social change in social work. "Professional" social workers are very familiar with the concept of social change as indicated in the current international definition of social work, and may practice it with social action. However, we do not have an exact definition of "social change," although we understand that it is not something that "changes the society completely."

Social change begins with changing social perceptions and social norms that possibly harry people, especially vulnerable populations, and turns "personal" troubles into "social" problems. It is very

important to analyse how "social problems" are created, or why people perceive some things as "social" problems and others as "personal" ones. As is often described in social work textbooks, historically, poverty was perceived as a personal problem, not a social problem. A more recent example would be the issue of domestic violence. It has been perceived as a "fight" between wife and husband, and considered a very personal matter that they should solve by themselves. Wives tended to be blamed and were treated as neither "victims" nor "survivors"; they did not even have the right to seek help from others. However, it has become one of the social problems with which social workers, marital counsellors, and legal professionals are now expected to intervene. This is one good example of "social change"; there must be a lot of people, regardless of their "professional" status, who committed themselves to change social values, social perceptions and social norms that have caused suffering for battered women. This should be one area that "professional" social workers and their functional alternatives get together to work on. Although their procedures are different, and should be different, this is certainly one area where "professional" social workers and their functional alternatives should cooperate for clients.

## Conclusions

This research aims to observe and record what (professional) social workers are doing and what functional alternative worker is doing, and conduct a comparative analysis between them. Findings indicate that the main indicator to distinguish (professional) social workers and their functional alternatives is social work education, at least completion of bachelor/diploma 4 courses, from the perspective of "professional" social workers despite the fact that people in general rarely distinguish them. Some members report that functional alternative workers also perceive what they are doing as what (professional) social workers have to do, and they identify themselves "social workers."

As indicated in the analysis, findings bring up two questions. 1) Why and how people seek help, and 2) Why and how social workers try to help people. For functional alternatives, it seems to be "compassion" to move them to help people, whereas for professional social workers, it seems to be "mission" to move them to help people. The altruism and dedication are indebted into ethics and values of professional social work, but professional social workers have the profession's responsibility and therefore, power to complete their tasks, while having limitation to dedicate themselves to their clients. We have to continue our endeavor to find out answers for "what is social work" without losing the ultimate aim of "social work," or the betterment of our society.

# CAMBODIA

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## Acknowledgements

**Introduction**

Professional social work is a completely new and yet to be defined entity in Cambodia. While the term "social work" can be translated literally into Khmer, it does not have the same meaning with the international definition, for example, given by the International Federation of Social Work (IFSW). Most in the general public would not be familiar with the term "social work". Those individuals, often working in the social service sector describe social work narrowly as a helper or supporter at the micro-level.



Some Faculty of the DSW

There are less than a dozen professionally trained local social workers in Cambodia who have gone abroad for their graduate degrees since until recently there was no degree program in our country. No Khmer has a DSW or PhD in Social Work. At any point in time approximately one dozen foreigners with social work degrees may be present in-country functioning as advisors, consultants or managers.

Professional social work training is a new endeavor in Cambodia. The new Department of Social Work at the Royal University of Phnom Penh was established by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport in 2008. The Department utilizes the international definition of "social work" by the IFSW and International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) and strives to deliver a quality



RUPP, Campus II

educational program that adheres to the global standards for the education and training of the social work profession set by these two organizations with support from an international partnership with the University of Washington. The first class of 22 bachelor's degree students graduated in June 2012. The Department plans to expand and double its student intake capacity over the next 5 years. EWHA

University from Korea has sponsored a MSW program also at the Royal University of Phnom Penh by sending their faculty to Cambodia to operate a part-time program which produced one cohort of 11 local students. A second cohort was recently enrolled. Recently the government created a new National Institute for Social Affairs within the Ministry of Social Affairs Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation and it recently received approval from MoEYS to deliver a bachelor's of social work degree program.

Presently, there is a lack of oversight with the expanding number of social work educational programs. Combined with a limited understanding of the social work profession and limited Cambodians with the requisite experience and academic qualifications to perform as faculty, consistent educational outcomes nearing global standards across all programs may be challenging to achieve.

Presently non-governmental organizations have blossomed with over 500 international and 3,430 local NGOs present in the country providing social and human services and performing functions that likely would be defined as "social work" yet virtually all local workers have no professional training in social work. The organizations target a variety of sectors or populations, such as disabilities, child welfare, anti-trafficking, mental health and trauma, human rights, community development, poverty reduction, street children, HIV, victims of interpersonal violence, land rights and evictions, prisons, and factory workers. These NGOs are more likely to be located in urban areas hence services are not evenly distributed throughout the country. Professionally trained social workers or functional alternatives are notably absent from a number of sectors where they exist in other countries, such as within the health care system or within schools. Many systems of care are under developed, such as a systematic response to child maltreatment or treatment options for the mentally ill.

**Historical Helping and Helpers in Cambodia**

Traditionally Cambodians have relied on religion, spirit worship, animism, and a system of kinship, feudalism, and patronage to provide education and address social and health concerns at the individual and village level. Hinduism was originally the main religion in Cambodian but in the thirteenth century Jayarvarman VII converted the nation to Buddhism.

In 1975, the Khmer Rouge regime destroyed all existing social systems and structures including religion. Temples were destroyed, monks were killed, and individuals were not allowed to practice their religious beliefs and customs without deadly consequences. Three decades after the Khmer Rouge, a form of Buddhism has been resurrected among approximately 85% of its citizens (Morira, 2011). Buddhism is declared the national religion within the present constitution and it influences many aspects of everyday life including helping others.

Historically the wat (temple) has served the community in a variety of ways. The Wat Committee is responsible for the needs of monks, for the pagoda, and also for the surrounding villages and its people. The wat plays important roles in cultural preservation, educational provision in particular in rural areas, a place for community gathering, minor material assistance, and a temporary shelter for travelers. The wat is also a burial place and contain stupas with cremated remains. Monks have a role to provide healing and advice. Community members go to monks for ceremonies like Sruuch Tuek in which a monk splashes water on a person who has a need or problem, such as wanting to get rid of their bad luck, unhappiness, or somatization problems. These ceremonies may also be used to bring good luck or fortune; for example, during Khmer New year, some people invite monks to recite and to conduct Sruuch Tuek at their home.. Monks may act as fortune tellers, such as to identify an auspicious date for a marriage or house warming. In summary, monks are viewed as healers of personal problems and physical complaints.

Nuns are respected by the community members and also seen as helpers. Nuns may stay at a wat or within the community and villagers will seek their advice. In practice, community members often go to nuns ask for advice and sometimes invite them to help with religious ceremonies in the community, like funerals, house warming, or to recite Dharma in a family (Ramage, Pictet, & Lyhun, 2005). Currently, some nuns have become advocates to raise awareness on social issues like domestic violence, or gender equity (Ramage, et, al, 2005).

Along with organized religion, Cambodians traditionally are animists and believe in spirit worship. These beliefs offer a number of options and strategies to address social needs and problems. These include utilizing Kruu Khmers and Kruu Chool Ruups, ceremonies to "Neak Ta". Kruu Khmers are recognized by community members as persons who are able to provide "common" treatment through the use of traditional medicine, for example, by reciting and blowing potions (Phlom Sdos) or burning substances to ease the cause of illness. They are generally males who have an affiliation with monks but live outside of the wat. Even today especially in rural areas, the Khruu Khmer will be the first person that people in the community ask for physical or mental health care. The treatment may include the provision of traditional medication or enacting rituals to help people evade spirits or spells. Many people in the community are not aware of symptoms of mental illness or trauma (as cited in Harachi, et, al, 2011, 51). Coton and colleagues (2008) found that 56.7% of schizophrenics began their health care seeking behavior with traditional medicine from a Khruu Khmer, 22% with western medicine, and 20% with religious care.

The next line of defense against problems is a Kruu Chool Ruup who are generally women who act as spiritual mediums to help the person come in contact with spirits from the dead who may provide information about, or solutions to their problems (Bertrand, 2005). The number of mediums significantly rose in the aftermath of the Khmer Rouge in part as it was a source of livelihood (Bertrand, 2005). Community members ask for help from Kruu Chool Ruup when members in the family are sick. The belief is that the root cause of a sickness or problem is an evil spirit or ancestors who are not happy

with their behaviors, such as not being respectful to their elders. If a family member recently has died it is important that the soul of the deceased is at peace. The Kruu Chool Ruup will invite a spirit to possess her and talk directly to the soul of the dead to find out their well-being and if they are in need of any assistance. Usually, the Kruu Chool Ruup will find out the cause of the problem or illness and suggest solutions.

Another traditional helper is a Neak Ta who is an ancestral spirit with whom the community pays its respect when they have faced with challenges in their lives; for example, villagers may pray to Neak Ta for rain to come for a good farming season. If the well-being of the community is not good, the villagers will organize a spiritual ceremony for Neak Ta to pray for health and happiness in the community. This spiritual ceremony may include the offerings of good to pay respect to Neak Ta.

Aside from these religious and spiritual resources, social support and resources for assistance have historically been located within social groups formed through kinship as well as patron-client relationships. The kinship network was central particularly during times of emergency or crisis when extra support or resources are needed. Historically, the kinship network involved arranged marriages to enhance material and psychosocial support. A patronage system existed during the time of the Angkorean empire in which labor was exchanged for stability and security. The relationship was individually based in which a client was linked to the patron through personal obligation. Even today the poor depend on the rich to survive, "We have to make our rich patron happy. We do not challenge them…so that they will like us so that they will still give us jobs or provide some rice when we are starving" (Meas &Healy, pg. 16). This social stratification is embodied within Khmer language where there is no simple pronoun for "you", but a complex set of pronouns based on the relationship between the speaker and person being addressed. Additionally, the hierarchy is not fixed only on one's position but also on the level of suffering or ability to accomplish things in life which is linked to the Buddhist concept of merit. Elders in the community believe that good acts receive merit, therefore, they

encourage people in the community  to do good, for example, by providing assistance to people who are in need in their community.

Cambodia has had a rich source of helpers and system of helping based on its religion, traditional animism, and personal networks and relationships.  As stated earlier, the period of the Khmer Rouge greatly impacted these traditional roles and sources of assistance. Additionally as the country modernizes, our citizens have looked beyond these traditional avenues for help and assistance.

**Methods**

To learn more about the meaning of social work and its functional alternatives, data were collected through two strategies, a public survey and focus groups of NGO workers.  First, we conducted a short survey of the meaning of social work from a convenient sample of the general public. Student researchers administered a short survey over a two day period at a public market, bus station, university campus, and park to gather public perception data.

Next, a set of 7 focus groups were conducted to gather data on nuanced definitions of social work and functional alternative workers in Cambodia.  Participants recruited for the focus groups were individuals identified as key informants of different sectors which currently provide social and human services as well as those sectors mentioned earlier that do not currently utilize anyone in a social work type position.  These sectors included: Women, Children, Community Development, Human Rights, Disabilities, Health, and Traditional Helpers.  Below are the questions that guided the discussions which were led by social work faculty.

TABLE 1:  Focus Group Questions

- There are a lot of social and health problems here, we'd like to ask you to help quickly list some of the main ones:

- Who or what segments of society take care of these problems?   (or are responsible to deal with those kinds of problems)

- What sectors do they work in?  [e.g. government, NGO, or area or field of work]

- What kinds of things do they do to deal with those problems?  [specific strategies or interventions or programs]

- What kinds of personal or social characteristics do these people have?

- What kinds of qualifications do these people have?   [is there certain education, training, experience they need or have to do their work?]

- What are difficulties these people face in doing their work?

- Is there other kinds of work that you think these people should do but do not do in Cambodia?

- Can you define what social work means?

- What kinds of issues to social workers deal with?

- What sectors do they work in?  [e.g. government, NGO, or area or field of work]

- What kind of work do social workers perform? [specific strategies or interventions or programs]

- What kinds of personal or social characteristics does it take to be a social worker?

- What kinds of qualifications does it take to be a social worker? [is there certain education, training, experience they need or have to do their work?]

- What are difficulties that social workers face in doing their work?

- Is there other kinds of work that you think social workers should do but do not do in Cambodia?

- Who should employ social workers in Cambodia?

**Observations of those who are mainly doing functional work and similar work**

**in communities where there are no or few professional social workers.**

**Findings of the Public Survey**

Social work as a profession is relatively new in Cambodia although many actors carry out work that can be seen as similar or overlapping with social work. Understanding public opinions on this profession is crucial for its further development. The key findings of public perceptions via our public survey were categorized into three sections: how social work is defined, types of social issues that social workers deal with, and how social workers deal with these issues.

**Definition of social work**

In total, 183 respondents were interviewed at different public locations in Phnom Penh. Almost 41% of the respondents responded that they do not know what social work means while the rest expressed their understanding of social work in different ways. Four main perceptions were found in this survey. First, social work is viewed as work that helps vulnerable populations who are in need of support or assistance; social work deals with social issues, such as people with disabilities, poverty, unemployment, the elderly, veterans, drug abuse or human trafficking. Another view seemed to categorize social work as any kind of work that makes the society better, including managing the development of the country, developing human resources, and ensuring social order, human rights, and social justice. Thirdly, social work was seen as something related to medical practitioners and traditional healers. Lastly, respondents reported that social work are tasks or activities undertaken by

different sectors of the government, for example, social welfare/affairs, development, economic, security and safety, education, health, and politic suggesting there was a perception that social work was synonymous with public social welfare.

**Types of social issues social worker addresses**

Interestingly, when asked to describe different types of social issues dealt with by social workers, about 45% of the general public respondents said they did not know. Those who responded pointed out a variety of issues related to health care, conflicts with human rights, social order, and economics. Overall, respondents identified issues like domestic violence, substance/drug abuse and the consequences of abuse, illegal drug sales, gangs, crime, traffic accidents, disability, gender inequality, human trafficking, labor, unemployment, poverty, orphans, child labor, injustice in the courts, illiteracy, housing rights and evictions, and poor public infrastructure.

**How social workers address above issues**

The public respondents provided a variety of programs or services that they think social workers perform in Cambodia. These include direct services (e.g., treatment, home-based care services, material support/gifts, legal support, referral, educational or vocational training, and livelihood enhancement) and indirect interventions (e.g., awareness raising and advocacy as well as research). Below are more examples of programs or services that were mentioned:

- Health care
- Referral of orphans to residential institutions
- Advocacy
- Job training especially for the poor and disabled

- Advocate for law enforcement, legal protection

- Pensions for people with disability, veterans, elderly

- Offer charity like supplies to schools

- Public education, like about HIV/AIDS

- Sanitation/clean water

Respondents also perceived that social workers work for the betterment of poor people and strive to make the society equal for all citizens. It was observed that very few respondents identified found that social workers do research to study the root causes of existing social problems.

**Focus Group & Social Issues**

The participants for the focus groups were individuals who are functional alternatives to professional social workers focused on different sectors. Hence the social and health problems that they identified related often to the sectors in which they worked. These included: (1) child related issues such as violence against children, child neglect, child sexual abuse, and child labor; (2) poverty; (3) poor education; (4) health; (5) gender inequality; (6) disability; (7) legal problems; (8) morality; (9) interpersonal violence; (10) human trafficking; (11) drug abuse; (12) human rights violations; (13) labor and migration; (14) garment worker rights and conditions; and, (15) corruption.

One participant said:

*"based on my experience, I have seen problems: children with drug addiction, children who steal or are in gangs. Due to poverty, children become beggars at traffic intersections."*

*"Our country challenges four problems. The first problem is land issue. Another is freedom of expression."*

*"The last point is related to women's status. We can see that nowadays there is discrimination against women and women lack participation in society."*

*"I think that poverty is the problem. In fact, poverty is the core root cause of problems that happen every day."*

Respondents stated that these issues were dealt with by civil society, NGOs, and the government. Many stated that government should be the most responsible figure to address all the above issues. They identified the following positions or roles of people who address these problems including: social workers, counselors, lawyers, government officers, health service providers, educators, human right activists, self-help groups, and religious groups.

*"It's NGOs who deal with these problems. A key actor is the government because it offers ratification such as UN conventions. NGOs are a facilitator which facilitates between the government and its citizens."*

*"I think that the person who joins most is the government."*

*"it's all of us, family, and all people in society. Firstly, it's from us ourselves,..."*

**Strategies or interventions or programs they do to deal with the problems:**

To deal with the identified issues, respondents said there were many interventions or programs to work at the individual, family, community, and societal level. Many kinds of services and supports are available such as self-help groups, advocacy, counseling, building community networks, providing education, strengthening communities' ownership, providing information, providing technical supports to government as well as other NGOs, legal services, monitoring governmental implementation of laws,

conducting research, providing tangible support (e.g. money for small businesses for vulnerable people to lessen their poverty), public forums, and campaigns.

*"....we had a public forum. We invited both victims and the ones who take responsibility to deal with problems."*

*"Generally, when there are problems, we can see two strategies. The first is internal advocacy and another is external advocacy. For example, the evicted community themselves have tried to advocate their best while they also find support from the civil society. We try to help them with strategizing, financial supports, and transportation. Also, we have increased their understanding of their rights, and about laws that should protect their house and land."*

**Types of qualifications these people have:**

Three main categories arose from the discussions, including knowledge and skills, education, and experience.

**Knowledge and skills**

To work in these social issues, a person needs to have a lot of knowledge and skills in order to work effectively in the communities. They should have general and specific knowledge related to societies and the fields they work in.

*"If they work in the field of child rights, they must have knowledge related to child rights, if they work on land issues, they need to have knowledge of land law".*

Many skills were identified such as interpersonal skills, group facilitation skills, counseling skills, ability to do self-care, and problem solving skills.

"Communication and facilitation skills are significant to sort out problems and help society and people. They also must have interpersonal skill."

**Education**

In general, while asking about the education that people need to perform a job, although some of participants reported that a person needed to complete a bachelor's degree in a relevant field, most did not think it was critical to have a university degree because their organizations will provide specific trainings to them in order to be successful in their jobs. Note that very little outcome evaluation or assessment is conducted in Cambodia hence little empirical evidence exists to actually know how successful these functional alternative workers are, the programs or services.

*"At my workplace, for community development workers, we do not need them to have a degree because they will be trained more (by our organization)".*

**Experience**

Some participants suggested that having prior experiences in a relevant field to that position would be useful to be a more skillful worker.

*"Sometimes, we cannot select skillful staff as we would want. Sometimes we want to recruit social workers, but there are none available. We choose someone with a degree in accounting and who has prior job experience in social work instead of real social workers."*

Interestingly when discussing qualifications, most respondents focused on personal or social characteristics of the person rather than technical skills, training, or degrees. In general, most discussed how a person should have certain values or attitudes like have high morality, have a strong commitment to help people, respect and value people, consider the interests of other people, be open-

minded, have a sense of justice, and value human dignity and equity. Additionally, the person should have certain behaviors like being flexible, kind, and also being creative.

> *"When we work with children, we must control our feelings, have patience, and tolerance."*

> *"They need to be kind and have commitment to help people in all circumstance, ….well-behaved"*

**Difficulties**

When discussing the challenges to addressing the social problems identified by the participants, many stated that lack of knowledge and skills were paramount followed by challenges in the government system. Most of them they lacked professional training and academic degrees. This finding is a bit contradictory as respondents also stated that paraprofessional trainings were provide both inside and outside of their organizations and hence professional degrees were not necessary.

In addition, lack of motivation and support from their bosses or organizations as well as the government significantly impact (negatively) their ability to perform their job. Many of their bosses do not have enough skills to support them; furthermore, their bosses are sometimes barriers themselves for the functional alternative worker to do their job because many managers do not know social work.

> *"Most managers do not have knowledge; thus, they do not understand what their staff do and do not know how to support their staff".*

Lack of resources for referrals is another obstacle raised by these discussions. Many reported that clients' needing services or supports that don't exist in their community.

One other challenge for them is donors' requirements. Donors often have particular reporting and accounting requirements and sometimes budgets are not sufficient to adequately cover the costs of a program.

*They said "donors do not understand our flexibility, we must follow their instruction, we cannot use budget for other things. Furthermore, there are complicated forms that must be completed"*

Lastly some reported difficulties derived from the government system and politics.

*"Authorities, most of them think negatively and consider NGOs as protesters."*

*"We observe that some village chiefs are illiterate....... Some officers do not want to collaborate with us because they think we might support other political parties".*

**Comparative analysis between professional social workers and non-social workers (functional alternatives)**

For the most part there is no distinction between a professional social worker and a functional alternative since the existence of the former is very rare. None of the focus group participants differentiated between the work of professional social workers and functional alternatives. For example, after the facilitators asked the questions about who addressed social problems and asked how professional social workers would address these issues, the participants said they already answered the questions. In other words their responses were the same in terms of activities and qualifications for professional social workers and functional alternatives.

**Conclusion**

Cambodia has a history of different kinds of people offering support and assistance to address different social issues and problems. Historically these helpers have been based on religious and animist beliefs and through structures of social hierarchy. There has been little integration between the historical helpers and the newer functional alternative workers.

Today functional alternatives have stepped in to provide social services and programs to support and address many of these issues or problems. Since Cambodia has not had a program to develop professional social workers, virtually of these individuals performing these tasks are functional alternatives. Many of these functional alternative workers have had on the job training or short training opportunities provided within and outside of their organizations or work places. The quality of their work or their ability to perform effectively was beyond the scope of this research and report. Cambodia recently graduated its first local cohort of bachelor level and master's level trained social workers. The numbers are small so it may still take time for there to be any understanding of the term professional social work. It is too soon to see the impacts of these professionally trained social workers will be on society.

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# FIJI

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# Pacific Social Work and Its Functional Alternative

**Introduction**

The intent of this paper is to clarify "(professional) social work" in the USP region, and identify its "functional alternative work" if there are few or even no professional social workers in a community.

The Social Work Programme at the University of the South Pacific (USP) is located in the School of Social Sciences, Faculty of Arts, Law and Education. USP is a regional higher educational institution owned by 12 member governments: Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Samoa. The University has campuses in all member countries. The Social Work programme is coordinated from the main campus, Laucala, in Fiji. The programme is offered by flexible learning through blended delivery mode (online, paper and face-to-face tutorials), students may study social work from any of the 12 countries of the USP region. The Bachelor of Arts with a major in Social Work at USP began in February 2007. Previously, a Diploma in Social Services was offered that provided education and training for para-professionals mainly in Fiji. The bachelor degree has now attracted students from most of the USP member countries.

The profession of social work is emerging in the region, with Fiji being the most advanced. The Fiji Association of Social Workers (FASW) was established in 1995 as "...a professional organisation to provide cohesion, support, professionalism and training for its members"(Kuruleca, 2005:1). It membership in 2005 was reported as being 140 with members working in a variety of fields of practice including "...generic welfare service delivery, housing, young offenders, domestic violence, disability, children's homes, from policy making to working at a grassroots level directly with people in the community"(Kuruleca,2005:1). FASW became a dormant organisation in 2008 and was revived at a Special FASW General meeting held at USP in July 2012.

Traditionally in the Pacific Island Countries (PICs) functional alternative social work theories and models of practice "...are based on Pasifika cultural values of collectively, kinship, spirituality and interdependence through balance and harmony in relationships" (Passells (2006) cited in Beddoe and Maidment, 2009: 18). Examples of frameworks for practice might include: acknowledgement of spiritual dimensions; integration of respect for and connection with the environment and the universe; and incorporation of cultural strengths and practices, underpinned by values such as faith, humility and love. The Pasifika perspective of social work stands in stark contrast to "professional social work" based on what might be termed 'Western' concepts based on an individual rather than collective self-identity.

This diverse cultural and emerging social work professional context provides the framework for this paper. The first chapter will discuss professional social work as it is emerging in the Pacific focusing on three perspectives: 1. Social Work Education at the University of the South Pacific; 2. Social Work from the Fiji Association of Social Workers' perspective; and 3. Professional social work from a non-government organization (NGO) and Government point of view. The second Chapter will focus the discussion on the functional alternative social work and elaborate how society members view social work. The third Chapter will make a comparison between professional social work in the Pacific and its functional alternative work.

**Pacific Social Work**

The University of the South Pacific (USP) Region has many unique characteristics that influence the teaching of professional social work. As mentioned in the Introduction above, USP is a regional university with twelve member governments and the students who take up social work as a profession potentially come from twelve different educational systems. It means also that when they graduate as professional social workers they will work in twelve different jurisdictions and governmental systems. We also have to recognize the multi-cultural and multi-faith aspect of the Pacific. The region is

characterised also by small populations on many islands and atolls, spread across thirty-three million square kilometres of ocean and covering five time zones. Climate change, particularly sea level rise is an imminent social and environmental issue for the Pacific Island nations. The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (2011) view poverty in the Pacific as 'poverty of opportunity 'rather than 'extreme poverty' as defined by The United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). A further aspect is the Pacific Diaspora, which sees many Pacific Island peoples living in Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand, North America, and Europe. The Diaspora contributes significantly to the economies of households and the economies of the countries (Jayaraman 2012).

Students can take social work at USP from any of the fourteen campuses based in the twelve member countries. A satellite communications network, USPNet (see Diagram 1) allows students to study through a variety of deliver modes including print, face-to face, blended and online, links the campuses. Professional social work is defined by the set of attributes, competencies and graduate outcomes that are expected of a social work graduate after completion of a three - year degree.
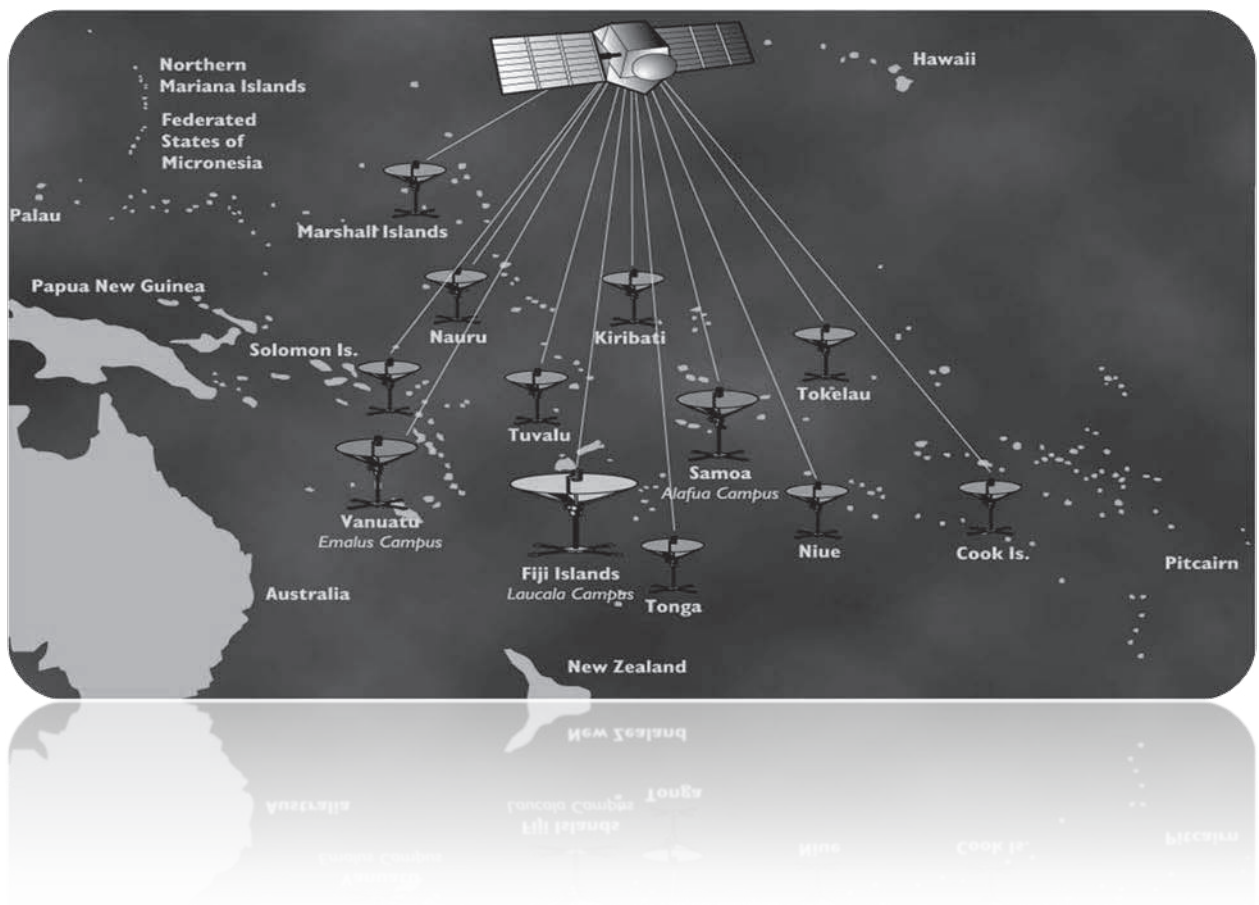
Image 1: USPNet (Koroivulaono 2012)

These graduate outcomes consist of seven University graduate outcomes and three Social Work Programme specific graduate outcomes (see Table 1). These graduate outcomes are embedded in the content of each course in the social work programme and students are assessed on their knowledge, skills and attitudinal attributes throughout their studies. Further students must complete field placements that are professionally oriented and supervision is  by a qualified field educator – but finding qualified field educators is a very real issue facing the field education component of the programme.

Table 1: University and Social Work Graduate Outcomes

| University Outcome | Clarifying Statement |
|---|---|
| Professionalism | Apply professional principles, values and ethics to their work |
| Critical Thinking | Evaluate ideas and opinions before formulating a conclusion |
| Communication | Choose appropriate language and modes of communication to share ideas & create understanding |
| Pacific Consciousness | Recognise the cultural heritage, and diversity of Pacific societies |
| Ethics | Apply ethical reasoning to their actions and decision-making. |
| Team Work | Collaborate with people of diverse perspectives to achieve goals |
| Creativity | Generate new ideas and approaches to solve problems |

| Social Work Outcome | Clarifying Statement |
|---|---|
| Advocacy | Advocate social and ecological justice in the Pacific and beyond |
| Methods | Use appropriate methods of social and community work practice to strengthen and empower the disadvantaged in diverse Pacific contexts |
| Policy | Formulate culturally appropriate policy options for diverse Pacific contexts. |

(Yeates 2012.)

From a professional social work educational perspective social work is about working with individuals, families, living groups and communities in Pacific Island Countries and beyond to: resolve personal and

social difficulties, improve the quality of their lives and community, and advocate policy options which provide a better environment in which to live (Social Work Programme 2013).

A professional social work graduate is expected to be able to do the following work in society:

- Work with people to overcome problems.
- Work with people by finding resources for people.
- Develop programmes to assist in meeting the needs of people.
- Work with people to make plans for the future.
- Propose policy to government agencies (Social Work Programme 2013).

The USP Strategic Plan 2013 – 2018 'Objective 2: Ensure programmes continue to be relevant and responsive to the needs of the region' states that international accreditation should be sought for all programmes (The University of the South Pacific 2013: 23). This initiative will mean that the Social Work Programme will be moving to develop a professional programme that meets international accreditation standards. Ife (1997) has indentified four discourses that shape the social work profession and the work that professionals do in Australia. These discourses are managerial, market, professional and community. Beddoe and  Maidment (2009) point out that the professional discourse shapes the profession and universities with regard to social policy – and this trend to professionalize the education of social workers in the Pacific poses a dilemma particularly in relation to 'Pasifika cultural values' mentioned above.

The Fiji Association of Social Workers'  (FASW) Code of Ethics (n.d.) provides the following definition of social work:

This code is based on the fundamental values of the social work profession that include the worth, dignity and uniqueness of all persons as well as their rights and opportunities. Social work promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance their well-being.

The FASW Constitution (2004) and By-Laws (2004) provide a further perspective on the definition of professional social work. The By-Laws(2004) specify that membership of the Association is open to any person who qualifies under the following categories:

i.    Is involved in the provision of social, probation or community services privately or in person and may be employed by a registered institution or establishment and committed to the purpose, goals and objectives of the association.

    and/or

ii.   Is a scholar, researcher, policy maker, manager, writer, academic, student or trainee who is involved in the enhancement of the social, probation and community work profession and practice, is committed to meeting the goals and objectives of the association and has contributed and shall continue to contribute towards the professional standards of the association. (FASW 2004:1 (a)).

Both the FASW Constitution and By-Laws further qualify membership to persons who are employed "...in the area of Welfare, Probation, Social or Community work (sic) in any government or Registered Civil Society Organizations (sic) establishments or Institutions". Screening and approval of membership as prescribed in the Constitution is by the Executive. The 2000 – 2006 membership lists for FASW indicates that there were a total of two hundred and four members - one hundred and ninety – four members based in Fiji and an additional ten members who were listed being from other countries. Of

the total membership, nine are listed with a social work qualification while fifteen are listed with other qualifications such as counselling, sociology, education, divinity and nursing (FASW Membership Lists). The membership of FASW is very diverse and includes persons with both formal professional social work qualifications and 'functionally alternative work' qualifications.

Empower Pacific is a non-government organisation (NGO) based in Fiji. The organisation provides individuals and communities with "...professional holistic health and social development services" (Empower Pacific, n.d.). Programmes that are run by Empower Pacific include: counselling and social work, HIV/STI gender based violence, support services for people who are marginalised in society, income generation projects, local and regional training, psychosocial support in disasters and research. Social work from this organisation's perspective is a distinctive profession. Social workers who are employed with Empower Pacific need to have a specific social work qualification and should be eligible for registration with the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) or the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers (ANZASW) and membership to the Fiji Association of Social Workers is encouraged (Empower Pacific 2012:6).

The Social Work Service Provision Policy demarcates the roles of social workers, counsellors, community services workers by the qualification an Empower Pacific employee may have, and the specific role they have in social service provision services of the organisation. In addition the definition of social work used by the organisation is quoted from the Australian Association of Social Workers' definition - "Social work is the profession committed to the pursuit of social justice, to the enhancement of the quality of life and to the development of the full potential of each individual, group and community in society" (Empower Pacific 2012:2). The practice of social work is conducted within the context of a "...holistic service provision (emphasising) the need to look at the whole person and consider their physical, environmental, emotional, social, spiritual and lifestyle situation" (Empower 2012:4).

Government perspectives about social work in the South Pacific region vary and focus on specific functional areas of social welfare with related statutory regulations and UN Conventions. For example in Vanuatu the Ministry of Justice and Community Services is responsible for social welfare with regards to women's affairs, child rights and protection, disability, correctional affairs, civil society, custom institutions and religious institutions (Government of Vanuatu 2011). In Kiribati the Ministry of Internal and Social Affairs, Social Welfare Division has responsibility for disability, youth, women and domestic violence, child and family welfare services (UNICEF and AusAid 2009 (a): 2). In the Division assistant social welfare assistant officers are responsible for the operational aspects of the Division. The Ministry also manages the Elderly Fund, which provides a monthly payment to persons 70 years and above (Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID 2012: 37 – 38). Similarly in Fiji, the Ministry of Social Welfare, Women and Poverty Alleviation is responsible for the administration of the Poverty Benefit Scheme targeting 13,000 low - income households, women empowerment and gender equality, child protection services, and developing an inclusive environment for senior citizens and disabled persons (Empower Fiji 2013).

In all the Ministries cited above, the civil servants are not required to have a social work qualification per se to carry out the statutory obligations entrusted to them. Many of the personnel in Vanuatu, Kiribati and Fiji are studying Social Work at USP and the Ministries in those countries have employed a few USP Social Work graduates. There is no legislation in Pacific countries recognizing the role of professional social workers in society and requiring the registration, licensing and accreditation of social workers in order to practice social work as a profession.

One respondent from a preliminary survey on the definition of social work made this statement about the professional social work that is done in Government service:

> Currently I am a paid Civil servant. And our work involves a wide range of programs within our core area of responsibility [Child Services programs – Residential Services, Court Reports, Adoption Services etc; and Family Services Programs –

Family Assistances Allowances, Care and Protection, Income Generation Projects, Bus Fares, Expanded Food Vouchers etc]

The respondents to the survey from both NGOs and Government further indicate that social welfare officers and social workers need a professional social work qualification to perform their duties.

This Chapter has provided an overview of professional social work in the Pacific from four different perspectives: professional social work education, professional association, an NGO employer of social workers and governmental provision of social welfare services. The next Chapter will focus on 'functional alternative social work' in the Pacific.

**Functional Alternative Social Work**

This Chapter will explore in a descriptive way functional alternatives to professional social work in the Pacific with examples from Fiji. As mentioned above in the Introduction, Pasifika oriented theoretical constructions of alternative social work are based on Pasifika cultural values of collectively, kinship, spirituality and interdependence through balance and harmony in relationships. The notion of self and self-identity is shaped and created through relationship and interconnection with the collective. Examples of frameworks for practice include acknowledgement of spiritual dimensions; integration of respect for and connection with the environment and the universe; and incorporation of cultural strengths and practices, underpinned by values such as faith, humility and love (Passells (2006) cited in Beddoe and Maidment, 2009: 18). Given this theoretical orientation, it is not surprising to observe that many of the alternative forms of professional social work are community-based and emphasize community participation and ownership rather than provision of professional services. Three examples are provided – the use of social media in building communities of interest in the USP region, community responses to the reduction in harm caused by domestic violence and violence against women, and the empowerment of people living in informal settlements.

Social Work Students – USP Region Facebook page has 126 members. Recent posting on the 'Social Work Students – USP Region' Facebook page highlight the issue of domestic violence and violence against women and children. One of the postings disseminates information on the global comparable survey conducted by the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre. The nationwide Fiji survey conducted between 2010 and 2011 using World Health Organisation methodology, involved 3193 women aged between 18 and 64 years. The survey found that " ...more than three in five (64% of women) who had ever been in a relationship have experienced physical or sexual violence or both by a husband or intimate partner" (Fiji Women's Crisis Centre 2013). Twenty –seven social work students and others have seen this post sent by mobile phone. This post was shared from One Billion Rising Pacific Facebook page with 485 'likes' indicating that number of people have seen that Facebook page. Other posts on Social Work Students – USP Region share posts from other organisations indicating actions that are being taken with regard to domestic violence. Share the Love on the UNICEF Pacific Facebook page, seen by 22 people on Social Work Students – USP Region, has 6,308 likes · 269 talking about this on their page.  A further post links to a youtube video Break the Chain, a video advocating through song and dance, the end to violence against women. Thirty-six Social Work Students – USP Region have seen this post. The most recent post, seen by 18 people, is again a Press Release that highlights a conflict between The Fiji Women's Crisis Centre NGO and the Government of Fiji with regard to the work  done by Government and NGOs in curbing and tackling domestic violence.

The discussion above about the postings on the social media Social Work Students – USP Region Facebook page is indicative of functional alternative social work. Anyone can be involved in the online community by sending a friend request. Through the postings people are networking  - sharing information, advocating through people signing online petitions, and taking real life action.  This research paper has also used the Social Work Students – USP Region Facebook page to solicit views on the definition of social work and the role of a social worker. Through social media communities of interest are created and maintained. The membership is fluid and can be exclusive or widely inclusive.

Another form of functional alternate social work can be found in the many community-based programmes that are found in Pacific Island countries. The Facebook postings above about domestic violence and violence against women note the 'Zero Tolerance Violence Free Community' initiatives begun in 2008 by the Fiji Department of Women in which the villagers themselves take responsibility to resolve and prevent domestic violence. Newland (2009) in assessing the impact of these programmes noted that in Fijian villages the *turaga ni koro* or administrative village head and the *talatala or* ordained Christian minister are the people to whom people go for advice and in the case of domestic violence are often the first people that people go to. Newland also notes that matters are taken to village meetings and the villagers work together to resolve issues. Where there are difficult cases, the matter is referred to the police and the Department of Social Welfare. The Fiji Women's Crisis Centre (2013 (b)) has facilitated training, support, monitoring, and evaluation of the villages that have been designated Zero Tolerance Violence Free Communities.

Another example of a community-based approach is the Peoples Community Network of Fiji (PCN). The PCN grew out of the work of the Ecumenical Centre for Research, Education and Advocacy's (ECREA) Economic Justice Programme working with squatter or people's settlements in the Suva area (Peoples Community network of Fiji 2010). A process of building communities evolved overtime that begins with workshops on Social Analysis within squatter settlements. Individual settlements were then brought together to share their stories and it was decided to form a more independent network run by the people themselves. The PCN became an independent organization in 2009 and is now funded by aid money from the Australian International Development Agency (AusAid). Community committees are formed in each community after a series of workshops on social analysis, empowerment, and economic literacy. Following the workshops community facilitators from the PCN visit the communities on a regular basis and encourage the formation community committees and support the committees on their action plans. The programmes of the communities are quite comprehensive and include: education, kindergarten, environment, health and hygiene, care of the elderly, youth and employment,

women, savings, security – law and order and inter-cultural and inter-religious (PCN 2010). There are 115 communities being supported by  PCN (Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) 2012 (b)).

The people see the facilitators and consultant for PCN as social workers and the work that they do is seen as social work. The primary consultant for the PCN is a Roman Catholic priest and all news media reports use the terms social work, social worker and social justice advocate to indicate his standing in society (Lewis 2013).

The Pacific Diaspora is an integral part of functional alternative social work.  Morgan Tuimaleali'ifano (personal communication), a Samoan by nationality and Associate Professor of History at USP speaks of the importance of his own family's Diaspora in the case of funeral arrangements. Family members living in Aotearoa New Zealand and not those living in Samoa made the decision-making for one particular funeral. Communication was through email and mobile phone with those living in Fiji, Aotearoa New Zealand, Samoa and the United States of America.

The Pacific Diaspora also contributes significantly to the well-being of family members in Pacific Island countries through the sending of remittances. Jayaraman (2012) notes that remittance inflows are important to Pacific Island countries, as they are three times greater than foreign aid.  These inflows from family member to family member are an alternative form of social welfare. It should be noted also that the transfer of money using mobile phone devices has increased the channels available of sending remittances and enabling people in remote areas to receive them in contrast to the Government schemes that rely on Bank or Post Office access.

This Chapter has examined functional alternative social work using a Pasifika oriented theoretical construction of alternative social work and examining cases of alternative social work that were community-based. The final Chapter will compare professional social work with the functional alternative social work.

**Comparative Analysis**

This chapter will compare professional social work and functional alternative social work in the Pacific. Findings from a preliminary survey on the definition of social work and the difference between professional social work and functional alternative social work will help to illustrate the analysis.

In the survey, social workers and social work students were asked to define or describe social work from their point of view. The responses were varied and reflected the definitions of professional social work as discussed in the first chapter of this paper. Some of the responses are below.

> The social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work.

> Social Workers provide a holistic psychosocial assessment and support service which addresses the obstacles that are preventing people from achieving their potential and life goals.

> Social Work is from my own personal perspective "providing assistance [support and guidance] to a person who needs assistance by using other alternatives and available resources within your area of responsibility. This will need constructive interview, counselling and tapping resource avenues that could be seen as sources of support towards the assistance required by the clients.

> Pacific Social Work should offer a wide range of social support and appropriate services to address the profession, organizational management and community needs.

Using Human rights as a legal framework to address community empowerment, meeting basic needs and facilitating our freedom of servitude. We as professional social workers should work alongside communities at all times and able to accommodate the two types of journey. One is the journey where the aim is to arrive at our destination as quickly and as comfortable as possible. The other sort of journey is the journey of discovery.

Themes from the responses were the provision of service, working with communities, using human rights as a framework for practice, adhering to the values of social justice, empowering people, and utilizing theories of human behavior and social systems – the latter indicating the need for a qualification. We can see similar ideas expressed in the examples of Chapter 1 from the Social Work Education, FASW, Empower Pacific and Government perspectives. One response posted on Social Work Students – USP Region Facebook page seemed to support a non –professional perspective:

uhmm can it be thing about helping a community working with the society and people to improve them to be resourceful and can contribute to the country's welfare.

Respondents to the survey also recognized that there are alternative or support mechanism in society such as culture and spirituality that support professional social work and networking. Social work was seen as important in Fiji. One respondent echoed the Pasifika oriented theoretical constructions of alternative social work stated above –

It is important as we are still very much in groups of people with strong collective support together with their own available resources where we can capitalise to fully complement within our area of work for our own people.

From this survey and the cases of professional social work and its alternative functional work some preliminary conclusions can be garnered. A professional social worker is seen as a person who has a professional qualification and who has acquired the competencies and specialized social work knowledge that is recognized for registration in a professional association of social workers. What is not so clear is the fields of practice that require these qualifications. A perusal of social work student field placements at USP reveals varied and diverse fields of practice. These include but are not limited to corrections, disability, youth and women's work, counselling, social welfare, self – help housing, child protection, domestic violence shelters, faith based –work, environmental work, hospital social work, mental health, human rights, community development work, care of the elderly, disaster management and relief, micro-finance and consumer rights. In each of these placements there are few people holding social work qualifications.

People who do volunteer work in the community are seen as social workers by the community and regard themselves as doing social work. They do not have formal social work qualifications. In a discussion, group about the membership of the FASW one member remarked that if formal qualifications were required for membership more than half the current members would leave the organisation and find another organisation to support them.

Professional social work is also associated with paid employment and very specific statutory responsibilities such as child welfare and protection. UNICEF (2009 (a) and (b) for example, identify the need for social workers in the Pacific Island countries dealing with child welfare and protection to have formal training and education in social work. Newland (2009) states that the people running women's crisis accommodation across Fiji are not properly trained and qualified to manage the organisations and provide proper support for the women and children in their care.

A major distinction between professional social work and functional alternative work is the level of community involvement and participation. In the community-based alternatives, the people of the community take responsibility for their own decision-making. In professional social work, the participation of the community is through invitation of the organisation providing the service or in the case of the Fiji Poverty Benefit Scheme qualifies for the scheme after an assessment by welfare officers on specific criteria set by the Department.

Similarly, the strategy of service delivery by the professional social work organisation is either centre-based, where the client comes to the service, or community-oriented where the service is taken to the client of community. In some instances, both strategies are in use. Community-based alternatives by their nature use a bottom-up strategy.

In conclusion, it can be stated that professional social work has begun to define itself in the Pacific with the establishment of the Social Work Programme at USP and the revival of the FASW, but the challenge will be  as one survey respondent noted:

> The association needs to protect the professional integrity of the role of a social worker, and advocate for national understanding and respect for the role.  It needs to remain clearly differentiated from other professional support roles, and assist people to better understand the work that social workers do. It also can be a vehicle for accessing training and resources for continual quality improvement of social work in Fiji.

Functional alternative work will continue to be important in the Pacific. Community-based work is in some people's view not compatible with professional social work and this will be a further dilemma that will need some resolution in the future.

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# INDONESIA

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# I. INTRODUCTION

## Background

Social work is a helping and empowering profession (Dubois and Miley, 1992). Traditionally, Indonesian people have practiced the tradition of helping, which is known as "gotong royong" ("mutual aid"). While in the rural communities, the mutual aid is more widely practiced, urban mutual aid is usually applied in the residential neighborhood and is known as "kerja bakti" ("community service"), where the community works together and helps each other cleaning up streets and safeguarding the residential area. Neighbors and extended family also give a big help when someone has a problem.

Although in Indonesia - as other Asian communities – social change caused by industrialization and globalization has been taking place, and brings impact on the existence of traditional ways, the nature of mutual help is still present in some aspects of life. In the context of society like this, the provision of helping as a profession is not easy to be understood for the public. To them, "helping" can be done by everybody. Moreover, this profession is still at a relatively young age. The first school of social work in Indonesia, which produced professional social workers with undergraduate education/Bachelor's degree, started in the 1950's. Later, in 1960's some social work schools were established, including at University of Indonesia. In general, it can be stated that in Indonesia, social work has not been well recognized as other older professions such as doctors and engineers. A study finds that social work still tends to use conventional approaches and the problems it faces are also relatively focused on the conventional problems, for example, orphan and disability (research conducted by University of Muhammadiyah, 2009). Yet with the rapid development of various social problems, it requires distinct social work services, such as, human rights approach (Ife, 2001) to deal with issues like migrant workers, refugees, violence, etc. Beside this fact, the good news is the increase in number of social work departments at universities in recent years, as happened to some of the Colleges of Islamic Studies / State University of Islamic Studies. Similarly, "Sosiatri" educational

institutions showed its interest and then registered to become a member of the Indonesian Association of Social Work/Social Welfare Education (IPPSI). "Sosiatri" was focused on macro aspect and later the name of "Sosiatri" Department was changed to be Department of "Social Development and Welfare".

Social Work is a humanity profession, which comprehensively addresses social problems: from the aspect of bio-psycho-social-spiritual, from the micro, mezzo to macro levels. It works in the realm of "human behavior and social environment" (Johnson, 1995). In the current development is even more appropriate to use "environment" rather than "social environment" as the former is wider, in fact the environmental issues today is becoming an important issue, and it is closely related to human beings. Social work is often said to be a combination of "science" and "art" because in practice, social work combines the application of knowledge (theories), attitude / values and skills.

**Indonesia: Geography and Population**

Indonesia is the fourth-largest population in the world after the countries of China, India and America. In total, Indonesia's population is 237,641,326 (Statistics Central Agency/BPS, 2010), and the end of 2012 were approximately 245 million (Coordinating Agency of National Family Planning/BKKBN). Indonesia consists of 33 provinces, 497 cities / districts and 6598 sub-districts and 76,613 village / village (BPS, 2010). Its area is 5.2 million km2 covering the sea area is 3.2 million km2 and the land, 2 million km2.

In the year of 2010, the population of Indonesia consisted of male and female at 50.17% and 49.83% respectively. The schools enrollment include Elementary School students aged 7 to 12 (97.49%), Junior High School students aged 13-15 (87.58%), High School (SMA / SMK ) students aged 16 to 18 (57.57%) and Higher Education students aged 19 to 24 years (13.91%).

The education system in Indonesia includes formal, semi-formal, and informal. Formal education takes 6 years of primary education and three years of junior secondary school. Both categories are known as the 9-year compulsory education. Later, high school takes 3 years, then a college education includes vocational education and diploma 1 to 4, the professional education, master's and doctoral specialists and applied research, and academic education/university includes undergraduate, master's and doctoral levels.

Non-formal education includes Early Childhood, Kindergarten Schools, education and training. Informal education is education developed in the family and society.

Social work/social welfare education in Indonesia is provided by 35 schools/universities. Most schools are under the Ministry of Education and Culture, and few of them are administered by Ministry of Social Affairs and Ministry of Religion

Indonesia has diversity in ethnic, religious, and cultural development. Although economic conditions are becoming stronger, however, inequality, injustice, social inequality, economic and political problems still exist, so that actual and potential social problems grow.

The social problems include inability to fulfill the necessities of life such as poverty, abandonment, isolation, social issues related to social conflicts between citizens, tribe / ethnic, inter-school, social issues related to human development such as problem of children, adolescents, the elderly, social issues related to health (physical, mental, and both), social issues related to the social function: drugs, commercial sexual workers, as well as contemporary social issues such as migrant workers, human trafficking, poverty as an impact of globalization, for example, free-trade policy (Ife, 2002)

**Research Objectives**

1.  To observe and record what professional social workers are doing.

2. To observe and record who are mainly doing similar work with professional social worker in communities where there are no or few professional social workers. In this study, they are called "non-social worker" or functional alternative worker

3. To make a comparative analysis between professional social workers and functional alternative workers

**Methodology**

- Research approach: qualitative approach

- Research type: descriptive study

- Techniques of data collection: literature/ documentary studies and in-depth interview

- Informants: policy makers, social welfare program executors, leaders in non government organization and social organization, professional social workers, functional alternative workers, social work education organization, professional social worker organization, local communities/beneficiaries and layman

- Research location: Jakarta (urban area) and Bandung (rural area)

## II. DISTINCTION OF PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORK AND NON-SOCIAL WORK : PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORKER'S POINT OF VIEW

This section will cover:

1. To distinguish (professional) social work and non-social work. Non-social work practice or interventions include other "professional" works, such as, psychological intervention and medical intervention. It may also include traditional practice, religious/spiritual activities, governmental works, or NGO's activities

2. The reasons/ways to distinguish them

3. To describe what each of them does/how each of them works

Social work reform is taking place in Indonesia. Law No. 11, 2009 states explicitly the term "Professional Social Workers". It is clear that to become a professional social worker, one must graduate from the Department of Social Welfare. Previously there was confusion; anyone who works in the field of social welfare is called "social worker". With the Act, someone who is not graduated from School of Social Work/Social Welfare cannot be called "Professional Social Workers", but the Welfare Worker (*Tenaga Kesejahteraan Sosial*) or the Volunteer. Welfare workers include those who have other professional backgrounds, such as doctors or psychologists.

Currently professional social workers work in various fields such as hospitals, communities, the companies (corporate social responsibility), government and non-governmental institutions, and other fields. Based on the target group, they work with elderly, orphans, the poor, disaster victim, abused woman, children (in conflict with law, street children, neglected children, the malnourished, children needing special protection), the mental illness, disabled, marital problems and youth (quoted from the Programs of Ministry of Social Affairs and Center of Disability, University of Indonesia)

It is a fact that social workers always work with a variety of professions and other humanitarian workers, as well as leaders of the community. In this study, those who work with social workers is called "non-social worker" or "functional alternative worker." Based on observation and interviews with informants, the functional alternative work can be categorized into:

1. Formal Setting (institutional-base):

 a. Other professions: psychologists, doctors, economists, etc. who work in the social welfare field.In Indonesia they are called "welfare worker"

 b. No background in undergraduate education, such as volunteers, community workers

2. Informal settings such as traditional leaders, religious leaders and traditional healers.

"Formal" setting means that the people working at government and non government agencies. At the government agencies, they are referred to the Welfare workers, namely those coming from outside social work educational background. In non-government organizations or social organizations, many volunteers devote themselves to the disadvantaged.

While in the informal form, volunteers also work with NGOs and the community through local community institutions. In addition, the role of extended family and neighbors who provide support to those who face problems can also be called "functional alternative work". Similarly, the role of traditional leaders, religious leaders (Buddhism, Hinduism, Islamic and Christian) and traditional healers are also important.

They all do similar work with social workers, but the relation is not a professional social work relationship and their work is not based on social work knowledge, skills, values and code of ethics. However, it cannot be denied, their role is crucial. The functional alternative workers who have non-social work educational background, such as psychologist and doctor, have the other intervention strategies, for example, medical intervention and psychological intervention

**Definition of Social work**

Indonesian Association of Social Work/Social Welfare Education has formulated:

*"Social work is defined as a helping profession for promoting social change, empowerment and problem-solving within human interaction and environment at the level of individual, family, group, community and society to enhance welfare. Social work intervention is based on theories of human behavior in social environment, diversity, human rights and social justice principles, as well as the socio-economic cultural context and the dynamics of local-national-global interactions"*

**Definition of professional social worker, welfare worker and social volunteer according to Law no 11/2009 on Social Welfare:**

**Professional Social Worker** is *someone who works in both government and private institutions who have the competence and social work educational background, and concern in social work obtained through education, training and / or experience in social work practice to perform the duties of care and treatment of social problems*

**Welfare *Worker*** *is someone who is educated in non-social work education and professionally trained to perform the duties of care and treatment of social problems and / or someone who worked in both government and private institutions whose scope of activities is in the field of social welfare*

**Social Volunteers** *are individuals and / or groups of people, with non-social work educational background, but implement social activities on their own rather than in government social institutions with or without compensation.*

Briefly, social worker refers to someone who does social work practice and has obtained education in Diploma 4/Bachelor in social work / social welfare. As described previously, the first school of social work in Indonesia, which produced professional social workers with undergraduate education/a Bachelor's degree, started in the 1950's. Later, in 1960's some social work schools were established. In Indonesia the social work schools are organized into an association named Indonesian Association of Social Work Education with 35 school members which offer a Bachelor/Diploma 4, Master's and Doctoral programs. In addition, there is a profession's organization called the Indonesian Association of Professional Social Workers. Based on the definition above, welfare worker refers to someone who has done practice in social welfare services but without educational background in social work / social welfare.

Thus, based on the Law, it is obvious that criteria required to be a (professional) social worker is a Diploma 4 or Bachelor in social work.
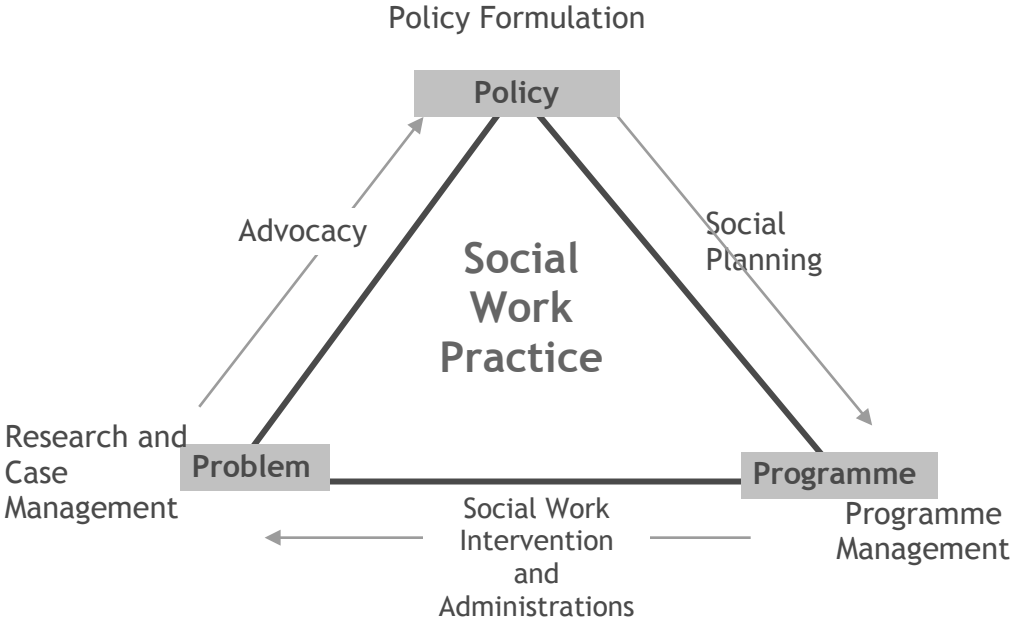
According to Regulation of the Minister of Social Affairs no 16/2012 on Certification of Professional Social Worker and Welfare Worker, both professional social worker and welfare worker were divided into 3 categories: Assistant, Generalist and Specialist;. An assistant is ranged from Social Work High School to Diploma 3 graduates. While, the Undergraduate and Diploma 4 graduates are generalists; and those who are educated in Master's/ Specialist Program are the specialist. The assistant social workers demonstrate competence in helping social workers.

In line with Law no 11/2009 on Social Welfare and Regulation of the Minister of Social Affairs no 16/2012 on Certification of Professional Social Worker and Welfare Worker, there are two agencies were established. They are the Agency of Social Worker Certification and the Social Agency's Accreditation Body. According to the Minister's Regulation, the Certification Agency is to recognize the qualification and competence of social worker and welfare worker. So, it can be seen that the role of those who contribute to social welfare field without social work educational background is acknowledged by the government. While, the Accreditating Body is aimed to protect society from malpractice which might be conducted by social agencies.

Moreover, it is interesting that later, based on the workshop on social worker certification, it was suggested that professional social worker should consist of only 2 categories : generalist and specialist. The people who made the suggestion said that those who are graduated from social work high school to diploma 3 should be called "welfare worker," like other professionals who work in the field of socical welfare, not "assistant social worker". They are encouraged to pursue diploma 4/bachelor education, so they can be called "professional social worker". The workshop was attended by the key persons of social work pillars in indonesia, like Indonesian social work consortium, Ministry of Social Affairs, professional social worker association, social work education association, volunteer association, social work student association, community worker association. However, until now the practice has still

been referred to the Regulation of Minister of Social Affairs no 16/2012, which categorizes social worker into assistant social worker, generalist social worker and specialist social worker.

The diagram below describes the scope of professional social worker expertise.

Policy Formulation

Policy

Advocacy

Social
Planning

**Social
Work
Practice**

Research and
Case
Management

Problem

Programme

Social Work
Intervention
and
Administrations

Programme
Management

(Quoted from Suharto)
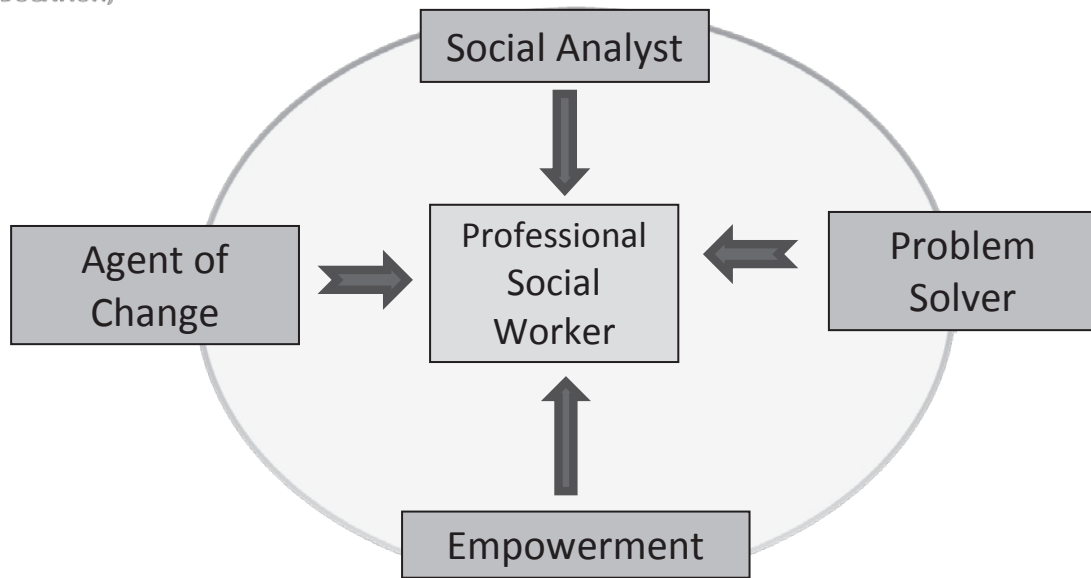
Based on interviews with the leaders of Indonesian Association of Professional Social Workers, data gathered shows that the professional social workers as members of this association are as follows:

**Areas of working experiences**:

    1. Managerial Work:

        a.Field/Project officer

        b.Senior Project Officer

        c.Manager

        d.Program Director

    2. Professional Work:

        a.Case/Community worker

        b.Supervisor (Senior)

c.Case/Community Development Manager

d.Adviser

3.Others:

a.Specialist, Adviser, Consultant,

b.Researcher,  Social Planner, Policy Advocacy

**The nature of their work include**:

1. Prevention

2.Curative and Rehabilitation

3.Developmental

**Fields of social work**:

1.  Poverty Allevation

2.  Disaster Management

3.  Children and Family

4.  Corporate Social Responsibility

5.  Health and Social Services

6.  Social Welfare and Human Rights

7.  Woman and Violence

8.  Elderly

9.  Mental Illness

10. Labour Protection and Advocacy

11. Migrant Worker and Refugees

Recently the Indonesian Association of Professional Social Worker has collaborated with Ministry of Health to promote the role of social worker in mental health setting.

The above empirical data shows that professional social workers work in a wider variety of fields, compared to data found through documentary search . Some of them are placed on top manage ment

**Institutions of their work**:

1. Government Institution  (many social workers work at the Ministry of Social Affairs)

2. Non Government Organization (National and International)

3. Corporate

4. Human Services Organization:

    a. Hospital

    b. Orphanage

    c. Rehabilitation Centre

For social worker, social work is a paid job. In practice, professional social workers apply: knowledge, values and skills. The knowledge covers, among other thing, Psychological theories, theories of group and organization. Also they apply several skills, such as, assessment, counseling, casework, groupwork, community work, participatory appraisal, communication, interview, home visit, policy formulation, the program development, monitoring and evaluation; skills of making proposals, drawing up a budget are also regarded important. They often arrange for case conference. All skills above represent the micro, mezzo and macro aspects as described by Zastrow (Zastrow, 1996).

They employ some social work values, such as, the individual uniqueness, acceptance, confidentiality and non-judgemental principle. Professional social workers have passion to help people and affection. They keep opened, accept everyone and do not discriminate people. Furthermore, they also understand differences, so treatment/ interventions are different from one person to another without discrimination. This is based on the value of individual uniqueness.

Empirical data shows that social workers and functional alternative workers have different tasks when they are handling cases. Social workers do planned change and generally they begin with a holistic assessment , then analysis, plan of intervention and intervention (solving the problem), monitoring-evaluation and termination. This complies with the problem-solving method introduced by Kirst-Ashman in her book on Understanding Generalist Practice (1993). In this process, the social worker applies social work skills, values and code of ethics. According to informants, social workers are more systematic because they have already practised them at school; they have a guide. However, a social worker informant shares that "many non social workers do social workers' job, in both national and international NGOs. Although their position is called program manager or something else, not social worker, but they call themselves "social worker"

Further, the social worker informants acknowledge the important role of funtional alternative worker in dealing with cases; the social workers obtain significant support by their presence. The welfare worker, like psychologist, helps professional social worker to assess child's intelligence with an accurate measurement when the case is a mental-retarded child. Moreover, our informants reveal that some functional alternative workers -especially volunteers and community leaders- tend to begin with "a trial and error" process and use "feelings". They do social welfare services partly based on altruism, to help people to solve their problems. Most importantly, the community members who are having problems have benefit of their help when needed. The training provided should enable the volunteers to deliver better services. Nevertheless, due to limited social work knowledge and skills, they can not be given a legal mandate to do social work intervention.

Interestingly, a professional social worker informant informs that when the functional alternative workers have already worked for a long time, the professional social workers (especially beginners) learn from them. Because of their experiences, they are very skillful.

Although professional social workers and functional alternative workers have major similarities in concern and desire to help solve social problems, the fundamental differences of the two categories is the educational background. As a profession, social work practice would require a person who have a background in social work education. This educational requirement is the same as the other professions like doctors, psychologists, engineers, etc. By having knowledge, skills, and values gained through higher education, the social worker has the authority to do intervention in accordance with the level of competence. The educational process provides all capabilities systematically to establish adequate competence for a social worker implementing social work professionalism. Thus, the difference in definition between professional social worker and functional alternative worker is the educational background

The other functional alternative worker, like prominent religious leaders, provide spiritual guidance to the people who have problems. Local community organizations help to arrange for spare time activities, providing skills and so on. Also the traditional/customary leaders; when a family is having problem, they give support and advice. Local wisdom is extensively used. In the rural area, the traditional healers also play an important role. They cure both physical and psychological illness. It is believed that this sometimes occurs because of black magic, for example, a man is falling in love with his client (a woman), but the woman refused him rudely, then the man feels hurt and resentment, so he sent black magic to the woman so that she suffers from mental illness. In the process of healing, the traditional healer uses spells and administers medications from leaves or herbs and water that have been spelled. Considering the importance of these community leaders, when professional social workers go to villages, first of all they need to identify community leaders and make efforts to meet them. Good relationship with the community leaders will help them establish a rapport with the community members. Also, they will help social workers when dealing with the community's problem.

A social worker is training community members in an
income generating program

The picture above shows an implementation of intervention conducted by a social worker to enhance the poor's lives. He motivates them to produce various kinds of snack made of banana. This is a result of the previous assessment which the community members identified their need to learn to make products of banana because their area is rich of wide variety of this fruit.

Further, the table below indicates the differences between Professional Social Worker and Functional Alternative Worker from Professional Social Worker's Point of View
The distinction between the two is based on four aspects: function, educational background, nature of intervention and intervention strategy.

### . DISTINCTION OF PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORK AND FUNCTIONAL ALTERNATIVE WORKER

| | PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORKER | FUNCTIONAL ALTERNATIVE WORKER |
|---|---|---|
| Function | Professional Social Worker | • Welfare Worker (Tenaga Kesejahteraan Sosial<br>• Volunteer<br>• Customary and Religious Leaders, Traditional Healer (community leaders) |
| Educational Background | Minimum: Diploma (level 4) or Undergraduate<br>from Social Work/Welfare Study | • Welfare Worker: graduate from other field of science like<br>  • social: antropology; sociology; politics<br>  • psychology<br>  • engineering<br>  • medicine<br>• Volunteer: formal education, nonformal educationl (training), no formal education<br>• Community Leaders: no formal education and formal education |
| Nature of Intervention | Planned change throughsocial work methods, applying social work principles and process/ phases, with social work values and code of ethics | Welfare Worker: using other social intervention strategies.<br>Volunteer : based on experiences, altruism.<br>Community Leaders: spiritual-base, local wisdom |
| Intervention Strategy | Core Intervention:<br>  • Micro (casework, family intervention)<br>  • Mezzo (groupwork, organizational level)<br>  • Macro (community, policy) | Welfare Worker: Psychosocial counseling, medical treatment, etc<br>Volunteer: Supportive intervention and administration<br>Community Leaders: Spiritual and cultural guidance |

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**III. DISTINCTION OF PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORK AND NON-PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORK : SOCIETY'S POINT OF VIEW**

This section is interesting as it will examine views of society on professional social work and non-professional social work. This section will cover:

1. To define social work from the society's view, with eyes of layman and people to be served , not from "our" side, with eyes of (professional) social workers

2. To describe what we name as professional social worker and the society names as "social worker" as empirically as possible

3. To describe what we think that (professional) social workers should do when professional social workers rarely exist or there are few (professional) social workers

4. The comparison of professional social work and its functional alternative

5. To identify the definition of social worker and criteria used by society or layman

In this study, we also interviewed informants from the general public to find out about their views on professional social workers. Based on these interviews, it is found that they do not know that there is a profession called social work. The informants regard non-social work as professional social work, without distinction. Furthermore, the impact perceived by the target group (beneficiaries) is similar between professional social worker and functional alternative worker. The research results indicate that the informants do not know that the social worker is a profession just like doctors, psychologists and other professions. For the informants, being social workers equal to being volunteers and therefore they are non-profit oriented. Based on these views, they believe that there is no need for them to have formal education. One informant said: "Social workers are usually people who do the work for free for the public, such as volunteers or community leaders (the religious and customary leaders, traditional healer) who reach out to the surrounding people, for example, when there is a health problem, consulting personal problem, making a decision about the best wedding date, etc". It is obvious, for the

society, the criteria to define social worker is not education as viewed by professional social worker, but the dedication to help people.

The other informants also reveal that they tend to ask for help of the parents, family, friends and neighbors when they are facing a problem. One of the informants informs that she visits a psychologist and a psychiatrist when facing a problem with her violent husband. In addition, the a informant reveals that in her culture, the oldest child is required to help her family when there is a problem, so when she has her own problems, she should be able to cope alone, otherwise, it would be embarrassing because she is used to play an important role when her extended family is facing a problem. In addition, her culture also teaches that a woman is stronger in facing the problem; she is more powerful than man. However, she must also respect her husband. And if she is having a problem and brings it to the others or a professional, it is a disgrace for her husband and family she respects.

The layman informant also states that professions such as doctors, psychologists can also serve as "a social worker" to meet his/her personal and social responsibility and not expecting anything in return. Further, the informant explains that in his village, "a doctor offering free practice to serve the poor, members of the mount hiking team who helped evacuate flood victims and the volunteer who helped provide food in post disaster are 'social workers' "
The other informant (layman) reveals that her brother is a doctor who serves in remote areas. In helping the community, he not only helps heal when someone is sick, but also helps empower people in the village. He teaches people how to do the filtering water to facilitate the public to have access to clean water. Also he trains people how to make pineapple jam (pineapple is abundant in the area), also teaches bookkeeping so that people are able to make an accurate calculation on a business income. According to the informant, he is a "social worker". Indeed, if we observe, all works done by this doctor, are tasks performed by professional social workers.

The picture below shows a good cooperation between functional alternative workers (a doctor and a nurse) and a professional social worker in health setting, to ensure that under-five year old children have good immunization and nutrition.



Functional alternative workers and professional social worker work
together in a solid team

The other functional alternative worker, like prominent religious leaders, provide spiritual guidance to the people who have problems. Local community organizations help to arrange for spare time activities, providing skills and so on. The same as the traditional/customary leaders; when a family is having problem, they give support and advice. The traditional healer cures illness, for example, when someone is distressed, she asks the traditional healer to help her. There is a belief, this condition is seen as "demon", perhaps because she spits carelessly, so there is haunted spirits that are angry. With his spiritual power, he is able to take the spirits out of the patient's body. He also becomes an important source for people to have advice when they have personal problems.

In the field, it seems that while professional social workers are not well-recognized and the amount is not adequate (considering the size of population and country), it is understandable if a lot of works are done by functional alternative workers, both volunteers with low education and welfare worker

coming from other professions. Professional social workers acknowledge that the existence of functional alternative workers is greatly needed by society.

Many efforts have been made by professional social workers and social work education organizations to continuously improve the quality of professional social workers and to make attempts for a social worker to hold a certification. When a multi-disciplinary team is formed in solving problems or helping clients, ideally the format of partnership would be as follows: a social worker performs tasks according to social work professionalism, other professionals (welfare workers) perform tasks according to skills in his/her profession, as well as volunteers to help in appropriate assignment.

## IV. Discussion and Conclusion

Based on the research conducted, it can be concluded that in the view of professional social workers, the distinction between social worker and functional alternative worker is the educational background; the former graduates from Diploma-4/Bachelor in social work/social welfare. However, from society's point of view, there is no difference between professional social worker and functional alternative worker; the most important point is that the needy people get help/support and their problem is solved.

Professional social workers exist and they are active in various fields. Unfortunately, their existence has not been widely known to the public. This is indicated by the society's view above. This fact makes the Indonesian social work activists continue to fight relentlessly. They are making great attempts to make this profession become a profession that is equal to other professions. Some of the efforts have been made include improving the curriculum in order to produce qualified social workers, ensuring that each social worker holds a certification, establishing accreditation of social services agencies by setting criteria allowing the institution obtains A grade if the institution hires professional social worker/s, creating social work practice standards, and recruiting professional social workers in social programs,

such as, in a child welfare program of the Ministry of Social Affairs placed throughout Indonesia. It seems that the other reason for the limitation in recruiting professional social workers is the fact that in the country there are still many residual programs which do not need social work skills, resulting in more volunteers working in these programs. Perhaps professional social workers would be needed more if the programs are more promoting and developmental.

Social work education institutions bear the moral responsibility to have their graduates be employed. Therefore, intensive promotion must be done because the major problem is the limited recognition of the society toward the profession. It is realized that functional alternative workers play an important role. Indonesia is a vast country with large population and increasingly complex social problems which cannot be addressed by professional social workers only, as the number is still relatively limited. Probably this can describe what Professor Akimoto claimed in his welcoming speech at the Research Seminar in Tokyo in November 2012: "All societies have been responding to those difficulties and problems in their own ways. Otherwise, there are no societies which could sustain themselves. We tentatively name them "functional alternatives" of professional social work…"

Furthermore, because the profession is not very well known, people tend to use the services of other professionals, such as psychologists. In many social programs, volunteers are more known to the public and they are the ones regarded as social workers. The volunteers also claim themselves to be "social workers". This fact is one of the reasons causing an ambiguous meaning to the term of "social workers". As a result, people might view anybody as being social workers, although they do not have an educational background in social work.

In social institutions, social workers occupy a primary setting. However, professional social workers also perceive that they need functional alternative workers to help clients, for example, in dealing with victims of domestic violence. This case can be regarded as the "primary setting" for social worker, which the social worker is a primary profession. In coping with such a case, generally a social worker

works in a multidisciplinary team with a psychologist, doctor, lawyer and volunteer. In this case, the social worker conducts an assessment of the socioeconomic conditions of the victim, including home visit; psychologist conducts an assessment on the psychological conditions of the victim; the doctor diagnoses the physical conditions; lawyer provides legal assistance to proceed to the court or if the woman victim wishes get divorce. It would be different if social workers work in hospitals. In this situation then they are a "secondary setting", where the primary profession in dealing with patients is doctor. When working in a team work, other professions such as social worker and psychologist support the professional work of a physician, such as, dealing with cancer patients. In these cases, Social workers support patients and their families with social insurance arrangement for the poor if the patient is having economic constraints. In addition, social workers can form a "self-help group" which consists of the cancer patients who strengthen each others through the group.

Finally, social work activists believe that someone who has a great commitment and dedication to practice social work but was not formally educated in social work, should be encouraged to pursue social work studies. With their rich experiences, the can become a great professional social worker. Indonesian Association of Social Work/Social Welfare Education and Indonesian Association of Professional Social Workers should support this initiative. Someone who does social work practice is required to understand and apply the knowledge, values, skills and social work code of ethics. Only through the formal education, they can have a mandate as a professional social worker. The different definition of professional social worker and non-social worker or functional alternative worker (welfare social worker and volunteer), refers to Law No. 11/2009.

Briefly, Relations and contributions of Social Workers and Functional Alternatives are as follows:

1. Currently many social workers collaborate with functional alternative workers and this brings a positive impact : the intervention/handing cases is more effective. However, the field research shows

that the implementation of their functions are mixed up at times, therefore, in the future, job description between the two should be made more clearly .

2. In social welfare field, which is the primary setting for social work, the functional alternative workers (especially welfare workers) perform its functions in favor of social work tasks. While, in settings where social work is secondary settings, like at hospitals, the social workers who support medical profession. In this situation, inevitably the social workers must have confidence to demonstrate their professional competence.

3. Social workers should be trained on the new development in social work approaches and skills, so he/she would always be updated. Similarly, the functional alternative workers (volunteers) also need to be trained on the basic principles of social work, so their work also employs social work values and skills. Or if they wish, they can go to a formal social work education.

4. Undoubtly, the role of functional alternative workers is very important. The role of social workers is also crucial in soving social problems, therefore, with all the existing limitations, social workers must enhance their quantity and quality in order to contribute to human's well being more significantly. In future, social problems in Indonesia will be more complex, therefore, the relationship and contribution of social work and the functional alternative work should become more and more mutually supportive and enriching for the benefit of disadvantaged people.

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# MALAYSIA

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**Professional and Functional Alternative Social Workers in Malaysia:**

**A Comparative Study**

Abstract

The opportunity for professional workers' practice remains in a state of ambiguity in terms of recognition, job designations and duties in Malaysia. The main objective of this study was to compare the "professional" (PW) and "alternative" (FA) social workers. A semi-structured interview was employed to assess the differences between them with respects to their educational level, work ethics and values, intervention and evaluation methods, perceptions of the clients on the services rendered, and the satisfaction level of service recipients of both the PWs and FAs social workers in two Malaysian largest cities - Kuala Lumpur and Penang. There were hardly any difference between the PWs and FAs in the categories of intervention and evaluation methods, and ethics and values. Findings of this research also suggested that FAs were as committed with social work ethics and values as the PWs during their intervention, although the former did not possess formal social work education. At the perception level, the PWs were perceived to be better in providing services. However, when it comes to real services, the clients were more satisfied with the services rendered by the FAs. While the PWs were supposed and perceived to be "professional," they did not perform as well as they could. Conversely, while the FAs were not recognized as "professional social workers," at times they were more "professional" than the PWs. These critical findings should encourage both the academics and the practitioners to have further discussions on conceptual implications of both practices and expand the research in future.

*Keywords*: Malaysia, professional social workers, alternative social workers

**Chapter 1: Brief Profile of Malaysia**

A brief profile of Malaysia will be outlined in this chapter. The demographic pattern of the population, work force, the economy and the education are discussed below. The introduction will enable an understanding about the characteristics of the multi ethnic-religious and a rapidly growing economy of Malaysia in relation to the social problems confronting the nation and the roles of workers involved in mitigating them.

**Demography**

Malaysia is a multi-ethnic religious country with a size of 330, 434 sq. km. With a population of 28.5 million, it is characterized by mainly three ethnic groups - Malay (66.1%), Chinese (25.2%), and Indians (7.5%). Collectively the Malays are Muslims, while the Chinese are predominantly Buddhists and/or Confucians, and the majority of Indians are Hindus with a small minority being Muslims amongst them. Most of the Christians are made up of Eurasians, Chinese and Indians. There are also a small number of the population adhering to Sikhism. Each ethnic group remains faithful to their respective religion and cultural beliefs, which play a dominant role in both their personal and professional lifes.

**Work Force**

As in other countries of the world, Malaysia has all three categories of workers - pink, blue and white collar. These categorization of workers (which is not exhaustive) include senior officials and managers, professionals, technocrats, technicians and associate professionals, clerical workers, service workers, shop and market sales workers, skilled agricultural and fishery workers, craft and related trade workers, plant and machine operators, assemblers, and elementary occupations (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2012).

**Economy**

The Malaysian economy has seen a periodic growth despite challenging external factors (e.g., the economic crisis of 1997 and 2008). The rate of 5.1% of gross domestic product (GDP) of the country in 2011 testified to this economic progress.   Manufacturing was the key economic mainstay of the country, contributing 27.5% to the GDP. Agricultural sector which was the backbone of the country

for many years still contributed 5.6% to the GDP of the national development in 2011. The country's largest economic mainstay includes service sector with a contribution to the GDP of 58.6%. They include transport, telecommunications, financial services (banking, insurance and capital markets), real estate, business and professional services, utilities, distributive trade, hotels and tourism, education and health services (Economic Planning Unit, Malaysia 2012).

**Education**

Education in Malaysia has been prioritized as a National Key Result Area (NKRA). The education NKRA is aimed at a provision of platform to nurture students' skills and personality, and access to a quality education for all. Malaysian education has undergone sporadic radical reforms and yielded better results over the past years. A rate of around 92% in adult literacy, universal primary enrolment, and the fastest growing rate of secondary school enrolment and achievements in tertiary level education all remain testimonies of such results.

**Professional Social Workers**

The helping profession has been in existence universally from time immemorial. Prior to the advent of mainstream religion, communities have been helping each other. With the coming of various religions; mosques, temples, churches, and synagogues have been the major institutions in these endeavours. Social work as it has been understood now emerged in the West during late 19th century as a charity-based practice and today has been transformed into a rights-based practice.

In developed countries, social work as a profession is recognized with the intention of meaningful change at the individual, familial, community, organizational and societal levels. The profession is committed for such change with an effective application of theoretical knowledge, human rights and social justice principles, and social work skills. Social workers engage in various settings such as social welfare, judicial courts, prisons, rehabilitation centres, residential and custodial care, schools, medical and public health services, mental health, child care, probation services, child abuse, domestic violence, and industrial organisations (DSWM, 2012).

In Malaysia, before the introduction "professional" social workers (PWs), the country's social work functions and services were operated by "functional alternative" social workers (FAs). Presently, most of the latter is from religious based organizations and other non-governmental

organizations (NGOs). Many of these NGOs are associated to various religions and are active in assisting the community at large and/or their specific constituents in getting aids, subsidies, community work and counselling.

**The Evolution of Professional Social Work in Malaysia**

Unlike some of its Western counterparts, the introduction of professional social work in Malaysia occurred after World War II when the Department of Social Welfare in Malaysia (DSWM) was established in the country in 1946 (Norani, 2012). Social work according to the Malaysian Association of Social Workers (MASW) is "domestically" defined as a profession directed by a body of knowledge, values and skills to facilitate optimal social functioning of individuals, families, groups and communities.

The term "domestic" should not be taken literally because most if not all of the workers were trained in the West, hence, incorporating the body of knowledge (theories, concepts, code of ethics and philosophy) of the West. The profession would apply a bio-psycho-social approach during its facilitation in order to restore the normal social functioning of the clients and enhance their problem-solving capacity and strengthen their resilience (DSWM, 2012). The profession is also tasked to contribute for social change and development. Such contribution may include its support of social policy and legislation enactment, social services and other programs that respond to the needs of people (MASW, 2012).

Although Malaysia has enjoyed a stable economic progress for decades, the same economic development has also brought social problems such as child abuse, abandoned babies, domestic violence, drug abuse and sexual offenses in the country, sexually transmitted diseases, and street children, among others. An awareness of these problems has produced an ample opportunity for social workers to address them and thus contribute to national development (Crabtree, 2005). During their engagement, social workers uphold a code of ethics and conduct based on the values of human rights and social justice (MASW, 2012).

In the Malaysian context, social workers can be categorized into two: i) "Professional" because they are members of MASW and/or because they possess a formal educational qualification in social work, and ii) "Functional Alternative" social workers may or may not hold educational

qualification in other disciplines and they do not have a degree in social work. Social work has been in practice for more than 60 years in Malaysia but has not been seriously regulated, raising question of professional accountability, ethics and competency of social workers. Regulation will ensure trained social workers' recruitment, registration and license, and enhancement of their expertise. Regulation will also elevate Malaysian social work practice and education to global standards (DSWM, 2012). The DSWM, along with Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (MWFCD), MASW and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), has been promoting a new professionalism in social work with the competency based international practices. This initiative is aimed at enhancing social work interventions on increasingly complex social problems that could challenge Malaysia's goal of being a developed country by 2020 (DSW, 2012). To actualize this initiative, the MWFCD presented the following several proposals to the Malaysian cabinet and they were approved in 2010: i) Establish National Competency Standards for Social Work Practice and Education; ii) Enact a Social Workers Act to implement the Competency Standards; iii) Establish a Social Work Council under the Act to regulate competency of social work practitioners and educators; iv) Establish standardized programs for social work education in institutions of higher learning; v) For the Public Service Department (PSD) to recruit qualified social workers into the public sector; and vi) Upgrade the Social Institute of Malaysia and establish other accredited training institutes to offer social work courses at certificate and diploma levels (DSW, 2012).

This initiative is tailored to address the perceived declining capacity in the field of traditional informal care and to respond to a rapidly changing local society's various psychosocial issues. This initiative is seen as a milestone in the history of Malaysian social work practice and education. It reflects the commitment of the Department and the Ministry, MASW, to the care, safety and protection of all citizens (DSWM, 2012).

For many years in Malaysia, both the PWs and FAs social workers have been working in different social settings with or without any formal education or college degrees (Fattahipour & Hatta, 1992). They could be Social Welfare Officers, Child Protection Officers, Probation Officers, Prisons Officers, Drug Rehabilitation Officers, Medical Social Workers, Social Work Trainers, independent Social Work Consultants, Social Work Lecturers, Researchers, and non-government welfare workers. With

the introduction of the Act, the line distinguishing "professional" and "functional alternative" is hoped to be established.

The actual figure of PWs in the country at present is unreported, but it can be documented when the Social Workers Act is enforced and social workers who wish to practice need to register themselves for their professional license from the Malaysian Social Work Council (MSWC) (DSWM, 2012). Presently, the DSWM is the largest agency that employs social work "professionals." The department considered some of them as social workers by token of them having a bachelor's degree in social work. However, only one-third of more than 3,000 employees are trained and involved in social work practice. The others are either technical, support or professionals staff (DSWM, 2012). On the other hand, MASW has more than 160 members, but not all are social workers as defined by international professional standard.

**Social Workers Act**

The cabinet of the country has approved the recommendations for a Social Workers Act on 23 April 2010, whose draft is underway. The long-term goal of the Act is to ensure the practice of all welfare employees with a social work degree in state institutions and NGOs in a 10-years' time. The Act will also enable the already serving welfare employees with no formal qualification to complete a one-year social work training course within 10 years of the Act being enforced (DSWM, 2012).

With the completion of the course and an assessment of experience, scope of work, area of practice, and previous academic qualification(s), the welfare employees will be considered for registration and a licensure by the MSWC. The Act will stipulate the creation of four titles for registration of social workers and three levels of licensure, and the requirements for each of them, which can be seen in Table 4.

Table 1.  *The 4 Titles and Criteria for Registration*

| 1. Associate Social Worker | 2. Social Worker |
|---|---|
| Citizen or permanent resident of Malaysia;<br>• Diploma or Bachelor degree in nonrelated social work discipline with more than 3 years practice experience in a social work setting;<br>• Member of the Malaysian Association of Social Workers;<br>• One-year course in social work to be completed within 10 years from enforcement of the SWA, or an overseas equivalent approved by the MSWC. | Citizen or permanent resident of Malaysia;<br>• Bachelor degree in social work, with or without a post-graduate degree(s) in social work, or<br>• Diploma or Bachelor with or without post-graduate degree in related social work discipline e.g. Counselling, Psychology, with more than 3 years practice experience in a social work setting;<br>• Member of the Malaysian Association of Social Workers. |
| **3. Specialist Social Worker** | **4.  Clinical Social Worker** |
| Citizen or permanent resident of Malaysia;<br>• Bachelor degree in social work with post-graduate degree(s) in a specialised field of social work practice;<br>• Practice experience of more than 3 years in a specialised field of social work;<br>• Member of the Malaysian Association of Social Workers; | Citizen or permanent resident of Malaysia;<br>• Bachelor degree in social work with post-graduate degree(s) in specific area of clinical social work;<br>• Practice experience of more than 3 years in a specialised field of social work;<br>• Member of the Malaysian Association of Social Workers; |

 Source: Department of Social Welfare in Malaysia, 2012


A full licence will be valid for a period of three years while a provisional and a temporary licence will be valid for whatever period of time decided by the MSWC. The levels of licensure and their criteria for the four titles are listed below:

Table 2.   *The Levels and the Criteria for Licensure*

| 1. Associate Social Worker (ASW) (full license) | Associate Social Worker (provisional licence) | Associate Social Worker (temporary licence) |
|---|---|---|
| Obtained registration of title as ASW;<br>· 1 hour per fortnight of professional supervision;<br>· 40 hours per year of CPE;<br>· Demonstrated competency-based practice;<br>· No restriction to use of title and duration of practice during validity of licence. | Has not met the full requirements to be given a Full Licence;<br>· 1 hour per fortnight of professional supervision;<br>· 40 hours per year of CPE;<br>· Demonstrated competency-based practice;<br>· Restriction in area and scope of work, in the duration to use title, and duration of practice. | Temporary residence in Malaysia;<br>· 1 hour per fortnight of professional supervision;<br>· 40 hours per year of CPE;<br>· Demonstrated competency-based practice;<br>· No restriction to use of title and duration of practice during validity of licence. |
| **2. Social Worker** | **Social Worker** | **Social Worker** |
| Obtained registration of title as Social Worker;<br>· 2 hours per fortnight of professional supervision;<br>· 75 hours per year of CPE;<br>· Demonstrated competency-based practice;<br>· No restriction to use of title and duration of practice during validity of licence. | Has not met the full requirements to be given a Full Licence;<br>· 2 hours per fortnight of professional supervision<br>· 75 hours per year of CPE;<br>· Demonstrated competency-based practice;<br>Restriction of the duration to use title and duration of practice. | Temporary residence in Malaysia;<br>· 2 hour per fortnight of professional supervision;<br>· 75 hours per year of CPE;<br>· Demonstrated competency-based practice;<br>·No restriction to use of title and duration of practice during validity of licence. |
| **3. Specialist Social Worker** | **Specialist Social Worker** | **Specialist Social Worker** |
| Obtained registration of title as SSW;<br>· 2 hours per fortnight of professional supervision;<br>· 75 hours per year of CPE;<br>· Demonstrated competency-based practice;<br>· No restriction to use of title and duration of practice during validity of licence. | Has not met the full requirement to be given a Full Licence;<br>· 2 hours per fortnight of professional supervision;<br>· 5 hours per year of CPE;<br>· Demonstrated competency-based practice;<br>· Restriction of the duration to use title and duration of practice. | Temporary residence in Malaysia;<br>· 2 hour per fortnight of professional supervision;<br>· 75 hours per year of CPE;<br>· Demonstrated competency based practice;<br>· No restriction to use of title and duration of practice during validity of licence. |
| **4. Clinical Social Worker** | | **Clinical Social Worker** |
| Registration of title and licensed as a Social Worker for a minimum of 3 years prior to application to be a Licensed Clinical Social Worker;<br>· 2 hours per week of professional supervision;<br>· 150 hours per year of CPE;<br>· Demonstrated competency-based practice;<br>No restriction to use of title and duration of practice during validity of licence. | | Temporary residence in Malaysia;<br>· Registration of title and licensed as a Social Worker for a minimum of 3 years prior to application to be a Licensed Clinical Social Worker;<br>· 2 hours per week of professional supervision;<br>· 150 hours per year of CPE;<br>· Demonstrated competency-based practice;<br>· No restriction to use of title and duration of practice during validity of licence. |

Source: Department of Social Welfare in Malaysia, 2012

**Functional Alternative Social Workers (FAs)**

Community work has been part of the traditional Malay community's custom and practice before being colonized by foreign powers (1511-1641 by the Dutch, 1641-1824 by the Portuguese, 1824-1956 by the British and the Japanese during World War II). During the Sultanate of the Malay States, the local community received protection, land to farm and other basic needs such as shelter and in exchange for the work they had performed like road building, palace construction and conscription during war. During the early years of the country, many charitable and voluntary work associations were formed to address the needs of the marginalized groups (Hatta & Saad, 2010). Based on historical facts, welfare works in the country had already begun in the late 19th century. Even though, most of the programs were implemented to drive the British industries and economy, nevertheless, they benefited the locals in the British Empire. Those programs, albeit serving the colonizers agenda, had laid structured foundation of the modern Malaysian welfare programs (Hatta & Saad, 2010).

Among the first was the Malaysian Association for the Blind, established in 1951 in order to look after the welfare of the blind in the country - this was an example of those engaging in the "functional alternative work" in Malaysia. Besides government agencies, there are at least 200 voluntary organizations involved in numerous welfare activities (Hatta & Saad, 2010). Given the track record of social work functions and services in Malaysia, FAs have been pioneers in delivering social work and services. With the presence of the five religions having a strong influence in Malaysians' daily life, these FAs have been delivering their services based on their respective religious values. Their social support and services include providing shelters and cares to the orphans, people with a physical or mental disability, elderly people, poor, problematic children, women, and disaster victims, to name some.

However, the prevailing assumption and perception from some sectors in society is that people who seek the assistance from these FAs are often not assured of receiving an appropriate level of professional service. As a result, when clients receive services from the FAs, there is the risk that problems may be exacerbated, or not managed at all (DSWM, 2012).

**Problem Statement**

Welfare work started in Malaysia for as long as people have inhabited the country. The number of PWs in Malaysia is insufficient. Relatively only a small number of social workers majored in social work, whereas, the rest were from disciplines like social administration, human development, psychology, sociology, counselling and others. Some of them received no training in professional social work but had to immediately resume duties as social workers. The activities were done purely on the altruistic nature of humans, they were not given any training, titles or work designations and there were no competency standards as they are trying to develop now; but nonetheless, they served the people that were in need (Hatta, 2009).

Currently, the common practice in Malaysia is that most of the social work jobs are being given to those who do not have formal social work education. The problem occurs in part due to the recruitment process of the Public Service Department and the Public Service Commission (government agencies that set rules and criteria for employment in the public sector). The main criterion for recruitment is the candidate's university cumulative grade point average (CGPA). Priority is given to graduate that has a high grade point average. For example, if a student majoring in History has a higher grade point average than a Social Work major, and both are competing for a social work job, the former will get the job. The implication of this recruitment practice is dire - clients of that History "social worker" will be victimized by the latter lack of social work education (Hatta, 2009).

Therefore, it is not surprising that this has caused an image crisis for the social work profession, which has stunted its development in Malaysia. A research is thus needed to sort out the contentious issues regarding the definition and roles of the PWs and FAs. The results of this research would be useful to understand more about the working development of the professional and alternative social workers in Malaysia.

This critical investigation also would encourage stake holders, in particular researchers to look into the conceptual underpinnings of both practices and expand the research in future. It is also hoped that this evidence based study may lead to a restructuring in opinions about both "professional and functional alternative" social work in the Malaysian context.

**Research Objectives**

The general objective of the study is to compare the PWs and FAs in Malaysia. The following are the specific objectives of this study:

1. To acquire information on the level of education of the these social workers in Malaysia

2. To examine their work ethics and values

3. To examine their intervention and evaluation methods

4. To measure the perceptions of the clients on the services rendered

5. To measure the satisfaction levels of service recipients

**Methodology**

A discussion on the research design, sampling procedure, research tools, procedures of data collection, and analysis of the study are as follows:

**Research Design**

This is an exploratory study using both qualitative and quantitative data. A semi-structured interview was employed to both social workers (PWs and FAs) and their respective clients in order to determine: (i) the work ethics and values of the social workers, (ii) the intervention and evaluation methods applied by both PWs and FAs, (iii) the perception and satisfaction levels of the clients on the service rendered. A survey questionnaire was employed to both social workers and clients in order to retrieve demographic data.

**Sampling**

There were two categories of respondents - social workers and clients.

- 40 social workers from two Malaysian major cities - Kuala Lumpur and Penang
  - 20 PWs from each city
  - 20 FAs from each city
- 40 clients from two Malaysian major cities - Kuala Lumpur and Penang
  - 20 clients of PWs from each city
  - 20 clients of FAs from each city

The PWs were recruited from the DSWM and the FAs were basically from the NGOs (both sectarian and non-sectarian). A purposive sampling was adopted for the sampling selection.

**Research Tools**

The process of data collection was divided into two phases and two different tools were used for gathering primary data. This study intended to describe the profile of FAs and PWs, methods and procedures utilized for intervention, challenges and barriers faced by them, levels of satisfaction and perceptions of clients on the services rendered by both of them. Therefore, both interviews and self-administered questionnaires were administered to both categories of clients.

**Data Collection Procedures**

Consent letter for both sets of respondents was sought out before collecting the data. Appointments were obtained to distribute self-administered questionnaires at the various agencies to collect the quantitative data from the social workers of both categories. For the qualitative data from the social workers, the interviews were also conducted at various agencies, while the clients were interviewed at the agencies (depending on their availability and convenience).

To gather information from PWs and clients, two DSWM offices in Penang and Kuala Lumpur respectively were selected. The researchers distributed questionnaires to the respondents and collected them. For FAs and their clients, four faith based organizations representing Islam (Masjid India), Hinduism (Sri Subramanya Swamy temple in Kepong), Buddhism (a Sri Lankan Buddhist temple in Senthul) and Christianity (Saint Paul Anglican Church in Sri Manjaee) were chosen in Kuala Lumpur. In Penang, they were four major NGOs - Women Centre for Change (WCC), Catholic Church, Human Development Centre (HDC), and Aid Action Research Group (AARG).

**Data Analysis**

To ascertain the difference between PWs and FAs, descriptive statistics was employed, and to draw a comprehensive representation of the perceptions and satisfactions of the services received by clients, the descriptive analysis was employed for the qualitative data.

**Research Findings**

This section is to discuss the findings pertaining to the objectives of the study. These include demographic information, level of education of social workers, monthly income, social work ethics, values, intervention and evaluation method adopted by them for their practice. Additionally, description relating to the clients' perceptions and the levels of satisfaction of services received

from both PWs and FAs are also reported in this chapter.

**Demographic Information of the Participants**

This section shows the findings of demographic information of PWs and FAs viz-a-viz age, gender, marital-status, religion and income (see Table 3). Similarly, demographic information of the clients of both PWs and FAs are reported (see Table 4).

**Professional Social Workers**

Given the age distribution, 45% of PWs were between the ages of 30-39 and few of the respondents (25%) were above 50 years. The findings also showed that the majority of the PWs (55%) were male and 45% female. 80% of the PWs were married and 15% were single. With regards to religious affiliations, 85% were Muslims, 10% Christians, and the rest were Buddhists and Hindus. The monthly income of the majority of PWs (60%) was between RM3000-5000 and rest (35%) was between RM1000-3000.

**Functional Alternative Social Workers**

The demographic findings of the FAs showed that 55% were above 50 years old, 20% were 30-39 and the remaining 15% were 40-49 years old. 65% of the participants were males and 35% were female. Regarding marital status, 65% were married and 35% were single. While a majority (30%) FAs were Christians, an equal number of participants (25%) were followers of Islam and Hinduism, and 20% were Buddhists. The information in relation to monthly income showed that 65% of the FAs were receiving between RM1000-3000 and 15% were drawing between RM3001-5000.

Table 3   *The Demographic Information of Professional and Functional Social Workers*

| Professional Social Workers | |
|---|---|
| **Variables** | **Percent** |
| **Age** | |
| <30 Years | 20 |
| 30-39 Years | 45 |
| 40-49 Years | 10 |
| >50 Years | 25 |
| **Gender** | |
| Male | 55 |
| Female | 45 |
| **Marital Status** | |
| Married | 80 |
| Single | 15 |
| **Religion** | |
| Islam | 85 |
| Buddhism | 00 |
| Hinduism | 00 |
| Christianity | 15 |
| **Monthly Income** | |
| <RM1000 | 00 |
| RM1000-3000 | 35 |
| RM3001-5000 | 60 |
| >5000 | 05 |
| **Functional Alternative** | |
| **Age** | |
| <30 Years | 10 |
| 30-39 Years | 20 |
| 40-49 Years | 55 |
| >50 Years | 15 |
| **Gender** | |
| Male | 65 |
| Female | 35 |
| **Marital Status** | |
| Married | 65 |
| Single | 35 |
| **Religion** | |
| Islam | 25 |
| Buddhism | 20 |
| Hinduism | 25 |
| Christianity | 30 |
| **Monthly Income** | |
| <RM1000 | 20 |
| RM1000-3000 | 65 |
| RM3001-5000 | 15 |
| >5000 | 00 |

**Clients of Professional Social Workers**

The demographic pattern of the clients of the PWs showed that the majority of PWs (55%) were above 50 years old and the rest (35%) were between 40-49 years old, and 10% were between 30-39 years old. With regards to gender, 70% were female and 30% male. When it comes to religion of the clients, 45% were Muslims, 30% Hindus and 15% Christians. As for the levels of education 90% had secondary education and 10% with primary education. The monthly income of all of the clients was less than RM1000.

**Clients of Functional Alternative Social Workers**

The findings showed that 60% were above 50 years old, 25% were 40-49 years old, and 10% were between 30-39 years old. As for religion, 35% were Hindus, 30% Christians, 20% Muslims and 15% Buddhists. For educational qualification, 55% had primary education, 25% with secondary education and10% were diploma holders. The monthly income of the majority (65%) was below RM1000 and 30% were receiving between RM1001-3000.

Table 4

*The Demographic Information of Clients of Professional and Functional Alternative Social Workers*

| Clients of PWs | |
|---|---|
| **Variables** | **Percent** |
| **Age** | |
| <30 Years | 00 |
| 30-39 Years | 10 |
| 40-49 Years | 35 |
| >50 Years | 55 |
| **Gender** | |
| Male | 70 |
| Female | 30 |
| **Marital Status** | |
| Married | 80 |
| Single | 20 |
| **Religion** | |
| Islam | 45 |
| Buddhism | 10 |
| Hinduism | 30 |
| Christianity | 15 |
| **Monthly Income** | |
| <RM1000 | 100 |
| RM1000-3000 | 00 |

|  | Clients of FAs |  |
|---|---|---|
| **Age** | | |
| | <30 Years | 00 |
| | 30-39 Years | 10 |
| | 40-49 Years | 25 |
| | >50 Years | 60 |
| **Gender** | | |
| | Male | 35 |
| | Female | 65 |
| **Marital Status** | | |
| | Married | 85 |
| | Single | 15 |
| **Religion** | | |
| | Islam | 20 |
| | Buddhism | 15 |
| | Hinduism | 35 |
| | Christianity | 30 |
| **Monthly Income** | | |
| | <RM1000 | 65 |
| | RM1000-3000 | 35 |

**Information on the Level of Education of Professional and Functional Alternative Social Workers (Research Objective #1)**

In order to meet the 1st objective of this study, the level of education of PWs and FAs in Malaysia is described. Table 5 shows that among the FAs, 10% were Diploma holders, 30% non BSW Degree, and 20% non MSW Degree. As for the PWs, majority of them had post-secondary education - 20% Diploma holders, 55% non BSW Degree, 5% BSW Degree and 15% non MSW Degree.

Table 5   *The Education Qualification of Functional Alternative and Professional Social Workers*

| FAs | Frequency | Percent | PWs | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Primary | 3 | 15.0 | | | |
| Secondary | 5 | 25.0 | Secondary | 1 | 5.0 |
| Diploma | 2 | 10.0 | Diploma | 4 | 20.0 |
| Non BSW | 6 | 30.0 | Non BSW | 11 | 55.0 |
| BSW | | | BSW | 1 | 5.0 |
| Non MSW | 4 | 20.0 | Non MSW | 3 | 15.0 |
| MSW | | | | | |
| Total | 20 | 100.0 | Total | 20 | 100.0 |

**Work Ethics and Values (Research Objective # 2)**

This section discusses the social work ethics and values that were practiced by PWs. They were 13

items in order to assess the work ethics and values practiced by the PWs during their intervention.

Table 6 below shows the means score of the 13 items.

Table 6   *Social Work Ethics and Values Practiced by Professional Social Workers*

| PWs | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Adopted impact assessment or evaluation | 20 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 1.05 |
| Adopted intervention process | 20 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.95 |
| Risk to clients not tolerated | 20 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.85 |
| Perceptions on potential harm | 20 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.90 |
| Not harming clients during intervention | 20 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.55 |
| Maintained confidentiality | 20 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 4.10 |
| Welfare of the first aims of SW | 20 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 4.35 |
| Perception on sacrificing others welfare | 20 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 2.70 |
| Opportunities for experience sharing | 20 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 4.40 |
| Perception on personal morality | 20 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.45 |
| Perception on moral standards | 20 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.85 |
| Maintained inter personal relations | 20 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 4.00 |
| Maintained professional relations | 20 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.40 |

The FAs were given 13 similar items in order to assess their work ethics and values practiced during their intervention. Table 7 below shows the mean score of the 13 items.

Table 7    *Social Work Ethics and Values Practiced by Functional Alternative Social Workers*

| FAs | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Adopted impact assessment or evaluation | 20 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 2.25 |
| Adopted intervention process | 20 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 4.60 |
| Risk to clients not tolerated | 20 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 4.20 |
| Perception on potential harm | 20 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 4.20 |
| Not harming clients during intervention | 20 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 2.60 |
| Maintained confidentiality | 20 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 4.30 |
| Welfare of the first aims of SW | 20 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 4.15 |
| Perception on sacrificing others welfare | 20 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 2.20 |
| Opportunities for experience sharing | 20 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 4.35 |
| Perception on personal morality | 20 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.60 |
| Perception on moral standards | 20 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.65 |
| Maintained inter personal relation | 20 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.25 |
| Maintained professional relation | 20 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.40 |

**Intervention and Evaluation Methods of Social Workers (Research Objective # 3)**

Table 8 shows that 100% of the FAs agreed that they set goals to acheive a desireable outcome during the intervention process while 90% of the PWs acknowledged that they set similar goals. Applying proper protocol to address the challenges facing clients was the part of intervention process of 90% of both PWs and FAs. To treat the clients during an intervention, 80% of the PWs and 55%   of the FAs adopted a multi-disciplinary approach. 100% of the PWs reported that they received proper support from their organization when treating clients, while 80% of FAs acknowleged such type of   support from their organization. For referring the clients for further support, 100% of the PWs and 90% of the FAs agreed that they referred their clients for such support. 95% of PWs and 75% of FAs claimed that they adopted either an assessment or evaluation to know the effectiveness of their services. To assess the impact of their intervention, 85% of the PWs and 70% of the FAs conceded that they employed some form of "structured" social work assessment pricinciples. 90% of the PWs and 55% of the FAs stated that they implemented their

own developed assessment criteria during their dealing with clients.

In order to know the feedback of clients on their services, 80% of PWs and 75% of FAs said that they undertook client's feedback assessment regularly. 85% of the PWs and 65% of the FAs stated that they maintain a record for their clients. 90% of the PWs and 75% of the FAs said that they regarded maintaining a record as important to enhance their profession. 85% of PWs and 65% of FAs acknowledged that they shared information with their colleagues. 75% of the PWs and 65% of the FAs agreed that they underwent regular supervision to enhance their practice.

Table 8

*The Intervention and Evaluation Methods of Professional and Functional Alternative Social Workers*

|   | Research Questions | PWs (%) | | FAs (%) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|   |   | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| 1 | Goal setting to acheive diserable outcome | 90 | 10 | 100 | 0 |
| 2 | Applied mechanism to address the clients' challenge | 90 | 10 | 90 | 10 |
| 3 | Adopted a multi-disciliplinary approach | 80 | 20 | 55 | 45 |
| 4 | Organizational   support for effective services | 100 | 0 | 80 | 20 |
| 5 | Made referrals for further support | 100 | 0 | 90 | 10 |
| 6 | Adopted impact assessment or evaluation method | 95 | 5 | 75 | 25 |
| 7 | Accommodated principles for impact assesment | 85 | 15 | 70 | 30 |
| 8 | Adopted self-style for service assessment | 90 | 10 | 55 | 45 |
| 9 | Obtained feedback from clients | 80 | 20 | 75 | 25 |
| 10 | Maintained records for clients | 85 | 15 | 65 | 35 |
| 11 | Importance of records to enhance the profession | 90 | 10 | 75 | 25 |
| 12 | Shared information with colleagues | 85 | 15 | 65 | 35 |
| 13 | Obtained regular supervision | 75 | 25 | 65 | 35 |

**The Perceptions of Clients on the Services Rendered (Research Objective #4)**

Table 9 illustrates three aspects pertaining to the services rendered by PWs - motives to choose services, convenient to approach service providers, and quality of services. A Likert scale was developed to measure these perceptions – a low score of 1 indicated very unsatisfied and a high score of 5 indicated very satisfied with the services. The findings showed that the mean score for the motives to choose services was 3.90, the mean score for convenient to approach service providers was 3.90, and the mean score for quality of services provided was 4.10.

Table 9    *The Perceptions of Clients on the Services Rendered by Professional Social Workers*

| PWs | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Motives to choose services | 20 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.90 |
| Convenient to approach | 20 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.90 |
| Perception on quality of services | 20 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 4.10 |

Table 10 illustrates three aspects pertaining to the services rendered by FAs - motives to choose services, convenient to approach service providers, and quality of services. A Likert scale was developed to measure these perceptions – a low score of 1 indicated very unsatisfied and a high score of 5 indicated very satisfied with the services. The findings showed that the mean score for the motives to choose services was 3.65, the mean score for convenient to approach service providers was 3.65, and the mean score for quality of services provided was 4.05.

Table 10

*The Perceptions of Clients on the Services Rendered by Functional Alternative Social Workers*

| FAs | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Motives to choose services | 20 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.65 |
| Convenient to approach | 20 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.65 |
| Perception on quality of services | 20 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 4.05 |

**The Satisfaction Levels of Service Recipients (Research Objective #5)**

Table 11 shows the aspects in relation to satisfactory levels of the clients of PWs - satisfaction with services, effectiveness of services, services received from other organizations, and likelihood to recommend services. A Likert scale was developed to measure these satisfaction levels – a low score of 1 indicated very unsatisfied and a high score of 5 indicated very satisfied with the services. The findings showed that the mean score satisfaction with services was 4.20, effectiveness of services was 3.60, services received from other organizations was 2.85, and likelihood to recommend services was 3.10.

Table 11

*The Satisfaction Levels of Service Receipients by Professional Social Workers*

| PWs | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Satisfaction with services | 20 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 4.20 |
| Effectiveness of services | 20 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.60 |
| Services received from other organisations | 20 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 2.85 |
| Likelihood to recommend services | 20 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.10 |

Table 12 demonstrates that the extent of satisfaction of the clients of FAs - satisfaction with services, effectiveness of services, services received from other organizations, and likelihood to recommend services. A Likert scale was developed to measure these satisfaction levels – a low score of 1 indicated very unsatisfied and a high score of 5 indicated very satisfied with the services. The findings showed that the mean score satisfaction with services was 4.05, effectiveness of services was 3.56, services received from other organizations was 2.95, and likelihood to recommend services was 3.60.

Table 12

| FAs | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Satisfaction with services | 20 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 4.05 |
| Effectiveness of services | 20 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.56 |
| Services received from other organisation | 20 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 2.95 |
| Likelyhood to recommend services | 20 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.60 |

In summary, there were no considerable difference between PWs and FAs. In work ethics and values, intervention and evaluation methods, and the perception of clients on services rendered, the difference between the two were negligible. The clients of the FAs however were more satisfied with the services rendered as compared to those given by the PWs.An interesting finding is on the level of education – both the DSWM and the NGOs did not have many social work educated staff.

**Discussion**

Domestically, there is a definition of social work in Malaysia established by MASW. MASW defines social work as a profession with a bio-psychosocial approach (theory, concept, code of ethics, values and philosophy) to help individual, family, group and community return to their normal functioning. According to the above definition, those not satisfying the definition are not recognized as professionals. Interestingly, the findings of this research showed a different reality. Inspite of not being recognized as professionals by the local definition, the FAs outscored the PWs in certain categories, albeit the differences were not significant.

There were hardly any difference between the PWs and the FAs in the categories of intervention and evaluation methods, and ethics and values. These areas are accepted as most crucial components of social work profession during its intervention with people. The popular assumption and perception towards the FAs was that they were not as good as the PWs. However, findings of this research suggested that FAs were as committed with social work ethics and values as the PWs during their intervention, and thus, resulting in clients' satisfaction with the former. The reasons can be contributed to several factors: An altruistic value imbedded in them which led to a

commitment to give the best that they could to the clients; secondly, their adherence to their respective religious values was instrumental for their dedication to serve the needy.

With regards to the education level, when recruiting the PWs for the respective posts in government institutions, formal education (Diploma, Bachelor and Master) in social work was not one of the basic requirements in recruitment criteria or even if such requirement exists, it was not effectively implemented during recruitment. This is because the government institutions often employed the graduates by emphasizing primarily on their CGPA, rather than the relevance of their degrees when filling vacancies in the public sectors. In the case of the FAs, employers appeared to emphasize more on relevant experiences for the posts in their organizations rather than focusing on the CGPAs of the potential workers.

Malaysia has seven universities offering social work program, with an average of 50 students graduating yearly from each university. It appears that most were not recruited by the public sectors and many too did not opt for the NGOs because of the unattractive salary. Most find employment, unfortunately, in jobs not related to social work (Hatta & Saad, 2010).

When it comes to clients' satisfaction, most were more satisfied with the services provided by the FAs. However, at the perception level, the clients felt that the PWs were better in providing the services. Again, this discrepancy shows the difference between perception and reality. Several reasons contributed to this - firstly, the clients found the services of FAs to be responding to their problems effectively as they expected; secondly, the services from FAs were reachable and even convenient to the clients virtually all the time. And finally, the clients of the FAs were relatively able to receive their services in relation to their specific problems because the workers were specifically trained to handle those issues and problems. Within the PWs domain, most of the workers were trained generically, hence, not able to meet the specific needs of the clients.

**Conclusion**

This study's findings affirmed the complex scenario about the nature of Malaysian "professional" and "functional alternative" social workers. On one hand, while the PWs were supposed and perceived to be "professional," they did not perform as well as they should. Conversely, while the

FAs were not recognized as "social workers," at times they were more professional than the PWs. These critical findings should encourage the stakeholders, especially the academics and the practitioners, to have further discussions on conceptual implications of both practices and policy. The findings also regard the existing definition of who are to be considered as social workers to be too narrow. The definition has to be revisited in order to reflect the Malaysian reality – inclusiveness and a broader definition is perhaps a better route in solving the criteria of the social worker.

Finally, this research has been undertaken in the two largest cities in Malaysia - Kuala Lumpur and Penang, hence, its findings can be recognized as representing the situation of

Malaysia's social work profession. It is also hoped that this evidence based study will lead to a rethinking about what and who exactly are "professional" and "functional alternative" social workers not only in Malaysia but across the Asian-Pacific region. More importantly is the hope that a mutual working relationship can be established for the betterment of the people that the profession seek to help.

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# SRI LANKA

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# Professional Social Work in Sri Lanka

Mrs.Varathagowry Vasudevan

This chapter attempts to delineate professional social work and describe the current status of professional social workers in Sri Lanka. It also presents the viewpoints and explanations of functional alternatives on professional social work practice and on the extent to which para-professionals and faith based social workers contribute to the delivery of related services in Sri Lanka. The functions of professional social workers are discussed thereafter prior to describing the professionalised characteristics of professional, Para and faith based social work practices in their delivery of quality services. In addition this chapter analyses the meaning of professional social work, Para- professional social work, faith based social work carried out for the service users and service providers and their impressions regarding the provision / receipt of professionalized services for themselves.

## Introduction to Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is an island with an areal extent of 65,610 square miles lying off the southern tip of peninsular India between the latitudes of 5-55' and longitudes 9-51' north and 79-41'-81.53'east. It is separated from India by a narrow strip of sea of not more than 40 km wide at its narrowest point.

Sri Lanka's current population estimated to be 20,277,597 (2012) has a growth rate of 0.7 % per year. Its population is multi-ethnic consisting of Sinhalese (74.9%), Tamils (11.2%), Indian Tamils (4.2%), Muslims (9.2%), Burghers (0.2%), Malays (0.2 %) and others (0.1%) Sri Lanka is an agricultural country since the latter half of the 20th century the industrial sector particularly the manufacturing sector has begun to forge forward with foreign investments taking the lead. The composition of the economy adjudged by the number employed in these three sectors shows that Agriculture employs 34% of the economically active persons while the industrial sector engages 23 % and the service sector 43%. Sri Lanka has a remarkable achievement in the literacy Rate (91.9 %) of which male literacy rate was indicated as 93.2 % and Female literacy rate as 90.8 % This unusual high rates are attributed to the establishment of free education for all and early welfare service delivery on the country.

**Objectives of this study**

The main objective of this study is to define professional social work in Sri Lanka. It attempts to define professional social work and distinguish between ' professional', semi or non- professional social work with a view to identify professional social workers and their contribution towards quality service delivery and to determine the future direction of professional social work in Sri Lanka

**Methodology**

The research design based on qualitative methodology uses the interview method and the consultative process at meetings with social work educators and practitioners. Data were collected on six experienced professional social workers and on six non -professional social workers who were volunteers and faith based social workers. During the interrogation, additional information was obtained on the activities of their organizations. A consultative meeting was held with intellectuals to arrive at a common consensus on the conceptual parameters of professional/para-professional/faith based workers in social work, and to identify the characteristics of professional/para-professional social workers/charity workers. The occasion was also used to identify future directions for professional social work

The collected data were analyzed to cull information on the attributes of a profession on the basis of the profession's systematic body of knowledge, instances of formal education and preparation for social work professional practice, Legal status /professional authority of the profession, and related social sanction / community sanction, code of ethics and sub-culture (professional association). The themes that emerged reflected the perceptions of the professional social workers and faith based social workers. The collated data was also subjected to phenomenological analysis in line with the professional criteria. Following this exercise to cite appropriate evidences, perceptions of six service users, children club, community members and their feedback on the performance of professional social work students and their use of skill were used to demonstrate the extent to which quality of services improve following reading of appropriate programs in the field of child protection.

**Educational system**

Educational system has played a significant role in the lives of people and thereby in the development of the country. The modern education system was brought during the British colonial period in the 19th century which comes under the control of both the central government and

provincial councils. Sri Lanka's education system is divided into five parts such as primary, junior, secondary, senior secondary, collegiate and tertiary. According to Sri Lankan law, education is compulsory to all children until age 14. However, the Ministry of Education strongly encourages all students to continue with their studies at least up to the G.C.G Ordinary Level.

The collegiate level studies extend for another two years until the G.C.E Advanced level. On successful completion of this examination, students may move on to tertiary education. At the tertiary education level admissions have become extremely competitive. Only 6% of the students who sit the GC.E (A/L) examination gain admission to the universities due to the non-availability of places in the Sri Lankan Universities and other Higher education Institutions (UGC, 2011). Unlike in countries like United States, where only a few per cents of the population is engaged in agriculture, more than 50 per cents of the people enter college (Akimoto, 2012). Thus, tertiary education as a whole needs to be developed and diversified to accommodate more students and new areas of study such as social work education in order to provide professionalised services to the people to help them cope with difficulties in life and receive quality services to reach total development .

**Social work education in a nutshell**

The National Institute of Social Development (NISD) is the premier institution in social work education in Sri Lanka. It is recognized by the University Grants Commission (UGC) as a degree awarding Institute, under section 25 of the Universities Act No.16 of 1978. The humble beginnings of this pioneer institution in social work education commenced in 1952 which was subsequently re-named as the Sri Lanka School of Social Work. This School was upgraded in 1992 and re-named as the National Institute of Social Development by an Act of Parliament namely: the National Institute of Social Development Act No. 41 of 1992. This institute functions under the purview of the Ministry of Social Services as an educational institution producing professional social workers to deliver quality services in the field of social services, social work, social welfare to promote social development. Social services mean the provision of material or cash grant to help the immediate needs of people. Social welfare services both universal and selected services are delivered in an organized system through welfare programmes. Social work focuses on helping people to help themselves to reach active citizenship in the process of social development. Professional social work in Sri Lanka therefore focuses on social work for social development. This is a balanced, total development of economical, social, cultural, political, psychological, emotional and spiritual morality of person, groups, community and country. It is achieved through professional social work practice facilitated by trained professional social workers and other professionals.

The institute is engaged in conducting para- professional and professional training along with collaborative research activities pertaining to aspects of social work education and practice, social welfare and social development in social work. As the premier institution in social work in the country, its **mission** is aimed towards "enhancing human resources for social development through the preparation of competent manpower in social work at all levels such as an entry level para-professional social workers, middle managerial professional social workers and policy level professional to generate and disseminate new knowledge and technologies for social work practice, provide specialized services for social welfare and social development.

**Changing Lives of People and the Need for Social Work Education**

People's lives in Sri Lanka have become more stressful over the last three to four decades, leaving many experiencing different levels of mental distress. Besides the inability to cope with the normal stressful situations, child protection issues created by abuse/violence, urbanization, migration, poverty and social and economic pressures related to rapid changes taking place in the society. The traumatic experiences that people endured particularly during the internal conflict and displacements have compounded the situation further in the area of mental health of the people of Sri Lanka. As the root causes for the deterioration of the mental health of the people are many, it could only be resolved in a holistic manner by a professional who is appropriately trained for such a task and it is the professional social worker.

Social workers are trained to assess, support and intervene in the issues related to the service users and their environment. To enable the affected individual and her/his family to cope with the problems created in life, the overarching causes/conditions settings have to be considered in the provision of the support required. Such a situation therefore requires the services of a well trained professional social worker whose interventions based on the concept of totality, include articulation and investigation of the impact of the socio-cultural factors, family relationships, resource availability etc to resolve the reported problems and enhance the wellbeing of the affected.

**Professional social work**

An amended definition for professional social work obtained by reviewing the international definition at a consultative symposium attended by the qualified teaching faculty, experts and practitioners in Sri Lanka propounded that "social work profession promotes social change, helps to improve human relationship within the cultural contexts of society and empowers the

people to enhance their wellbeing and utilize evidence-based knowledge derived from research and practice. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work to promote peace and harmony"( NISD, 2011).

The new draft of the global definition of the social work profession defines that "social work facilitates social development and social cohesion. Core to social work is supporting people to influence their social environments to achieve sustainable wellbeing. The profession is underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, and indigenous knowledge. Principles of human rights, collective responsibility and social justice are fundamental to practice"( IFSW & IASSW 2013).

Both definitions stated above, focus on knowledge, skill and value based practice oriented towards achieving social development through social cohesion. It also conveys the fact that social work bases its contentions rightfully on theories, human rights, and indigenous knowledge rather than on common sense. A professional social worker is therefore well equipped with the required knowledge base acquired through formal advanced studies like the diploma, Bachelor, Master/PHD degrees. Such professionals are also called social work educators or practitioners, however; around 1250 trained social workers are estimated to be available for the 20 million people in Sri Lanka. One of the faith based organization's interviewee defined as professional social worker as "a person who brings wholeness in to anybody/family/community and the work should be secular". Another interviewee expressed, future social work to be focused professionally build up a caring society to organize themselves for their daily services "should not make dependency symptom."

To achieve such a state we need to train more professional social workers to work with people to be professionalized  adequately  by an authorized body that would regularize professional social work education, and practice. The quality of professional social workers  is anticipated to reach the  level  described should  help place social workers on par with the specialists as one of the  leading professions of the 21s century dispelling the misconception of the meaning of the nomenclature `social work' and `social worker'  in the local languages in Sri Lanka. As such this study has demonstrated very empirically that social work has its own positive professional attributes to remain a useful discipline with very strong characteristics strong enough to withstand competition from other disciplines. Viewing from such a context, this study takes this opportunity to reiterate the urgency for the formulation of a national code of ethics to accommodate the multi-cultural context of the country.

**Recognition of Professional Social work as a highly Specialised Profession**

In the classification of jobs, Sri Lanka adopted the international standards which give high recognition to professional social work. The SLSCO-11 adopted for the classification of Sri Lankan jobs the occupations are arranged into 466 unit groups at the most detailed level of the classification hierarchy. The classification is based on the premise that all jobs in Sri Lanka can be assigned to one (and only one) of these unit groups. In the SLSCO-11 classification ten major groups are identified an each of those is made up of two or more sub-major groups, which in turn are made up of one or more minor groups. Each major group is denoted by a 1-digit code. Each Sub major group is denoted by a 2-digit code, comprising the major group code plus one digit. In the same way minor groups are denoted by 3-digit codes and unit groups by 4-digit codes comprising the higher level code plus on digit in each case.

The overall system of SLSCO-11consist of 43 sub-major groups, 137 minor groups and 466 unit groups. Detailed occupations in the SLSCO-11 with similar job duties, and in some cases skills, education, and/or training, are grouped together. Each worker is classified into only one of the 466 detailed occupations based on the tasks he or she performs.

According to this classification Professionals come second with a single digit of 2. There are several sub major group under that. Under each of those sub major category minor groups with three digits appear Social and Religious professionals. Within this sub major group, the minor group of Social work and Counselling professionals appear with 4 digits of 2635 comprising of among others - Counselling Officer, Mediation Board Officer Social Counsellor and the Social Work Professional. Similarly Social and Religious Associate Professionals appear with 4 digits of 3421 comprising of social work associate and religious associate professional working as faith based social workers and volunteers.

This classification, while revealing very clearly that professional social work is a highly sophisticated and specialized job, also points out that faith based/religious professionals are not specialised professionals but that they belong to the category of non-social workers. In case of social work, despite the recognition given to it, social work education essential to produce those specialists remains least supported.

This unfortunate situation seems to arise from the inadequate importance given to this discipline/profession by the people of Sri Lanka. The most plausible explanation for this state of affairs is the terminology used in the local languages for the profession. The term `worker' while trivialising the profession, does not in any way give due recognition to the specialised nature of the job.  This is also reflected in the failure of many of the State Ministries and Departments to give due recognition to social work as a specialised job category. It is therefore urgently necessary to prioritise the subject areas to give due recognition to social work when recruiting personnel into jobs. As reiterated by many social work professionals (Nigel Hall

2006), social workers too should attempt to make the public image of their profession coherent and accurate.

The term **"para"** derives from a Greek word meaning by the side of or alongside. Para-Professional Social Workers are volunteers or members of community-based organizations or Government who have received basic (limited) training in the delivery of social services/social welfare services. Para-professional social workers are considered as `crash course creations' of NGOs who are employed after a few months of training given to the trainees, Para-Professional Social Workers with their limited knowledge base are only capable of working under the guidance of a qualified supervisor, as they cannot replace professionally trained social work practitioners.  A survey conducted by NISD  revealed that there were 31303 welfare related jobs which belong to the category of para- professionals in the public service in 2005 ( NISD SURVEY, 2005).

This study defines the diploma holders as para-professionals in social work who work in the field of welfare and social development. According to a survey of qualified professional social workers carried out by the Research division of NISD (2012) which included 225 diploma holders, majority of them were found to be working as welfare officers in such designations as social service officer, youth service officer, development officer, welfare officer, field officer, psycho social officer, migrant worker and management officer. A few holding social science degrees along with a diploma in social work were found engaged as social workers, community development consultants, project coordinators, and as assistant directors. Significant numbers of the BSW and MSW qualified degree holders were located in middle managerial positions such as social work educators, project officer, project coordinators, director and so on. However, Sri Lanka Association for Professional Social Workers allows social work diploma, social work bachelor's and master's degree holders to get full membership while allowing para-professionals with diploma holders in any other disciplines with more than three years experiences to become only associate members.

The venn diagram given below clearly illustrates the inter relationships between professional social work, Para-professional social work and faith based social work and the unique interconnectedness that distinguishes them in terms of the knowledge, skill and attitudes of professional social work.

Venn Diagram No: 1.1

**Professional Social workers**

**Knowledge**

**Western Scientific Theory/ Local Cultural context based professional social work**

**para- professional work with basic training on working with people .**

**Skills**

**Para-professional social workers**

**faith based social work with compassion and charity, Services to God**

**Attitude**

**Faith/ Spritual - based social workers**
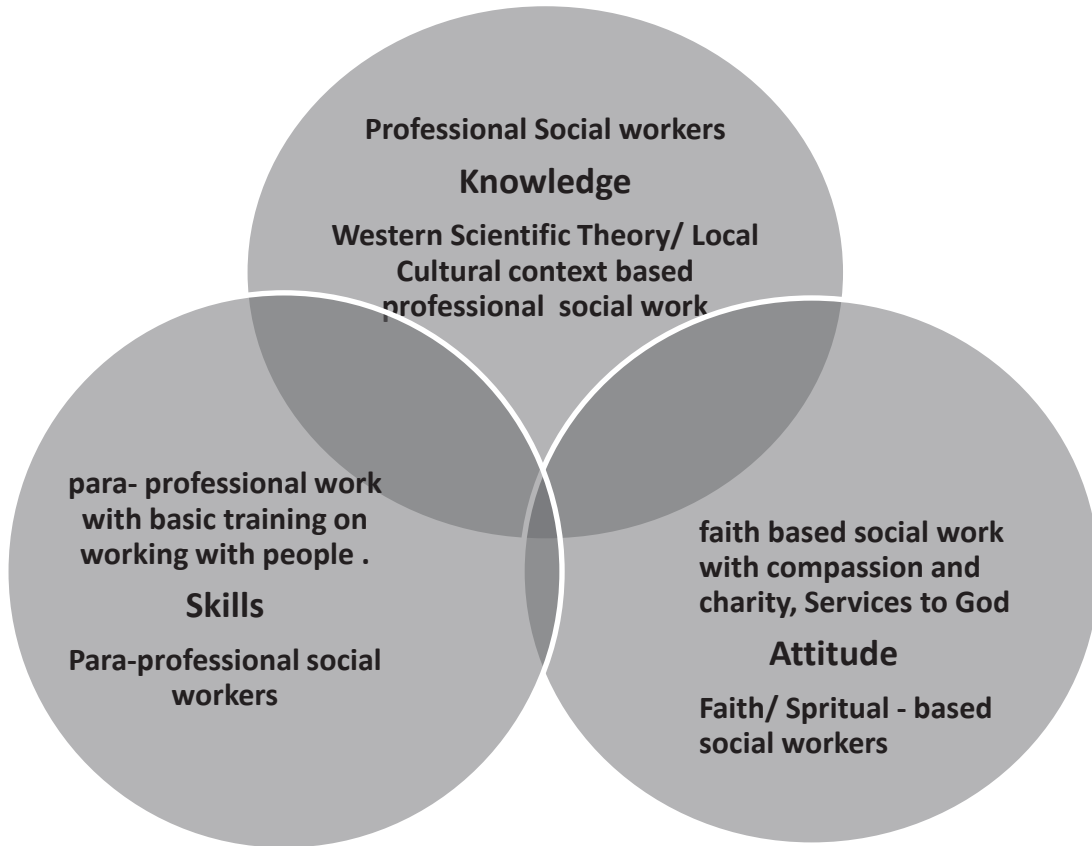
This venn diagram depicts very clearly the basic traits of the three facets of social work conveying the marked concern that professional social work has with social work theory and other social sciences and the greater involvement of para-professionals with skills rather than in knowledge and attitudes and the focus of the non-professional social work on service and compassion to build caring relationships. This provides a clear explanation for the variation in service user autonomy that depends on the type of service provided. Highlighting these traits this study attempts to emphasise that knowledge, skills and attitudes must be used appropriately according to the type of service delivery that is needed to build a caring society. In this context this study also illustrates the importance of using theories based on strength, right, and/or empowerment approaches relevant to local cultural context rather than using deficit model of service delivery.

The fact that professional skills are transmitted to service users to help them to help themselves and build mutual aid system among the people and communities is conveyed in this study though it is known that such a situation is hard to achieve under the existing welfare policies and service delivery system. The study therefore suggests streamlining the discipline/profession the services

of multi-disciplinary teams consisting of social work professional and other professionals should be obtained

**Perception of Service Users**

To understand the perceptions of service users, feedbacks were obtained from children, families, children's clubs and communities in the form of statements. A person with special needs expressed (one leg was broken) his gratitude towards an officer who provided professional services through case management at community level. In the words of the person with special needs "I wanted to live with dignity and a probation officer who visited my house agreed to help my family, my children were re-unified with us after temporarily obtaining care in children's home and it helped me to get involved in appropriate livelihood activities through case management services extended by probation officer in collaboration with other relevant officers who helped me with the family strengthening programme making me very proud by helping me build my own house". "In past, officers did not come to our community like the officers to listen to our needs and problems and work with us to protect our children, and we do listen to our children and help them to form children club."

This statement reveals very clearly the lack of professional intervention and the absence of people's appreciation of the deeds of professionally trained social workers at community levels. When a community takes the responsibility to managing their own lives, to become self-governing societies that enhance their skills through mutual aid system will definitely lead to the adoption of healthy lifestyles among the community members. Service providers in their observation stated that they must be in the field and work with community members to enhancing community based on preventive child protection system rather than seek remedial ways. These illustrations also demonstrate the appreciation expressed by the service users of the professional services that they receive with dignity and respect.

**The way forward**

It could therefore be said that this study provides ample evidence to empirically state that developing social work education should be considered the `sine qua non' of the future development and recognition of social work discipline and profession to bring about a positive change in the social structure that provides quality human service in the country. Although Sri Lank recognizes, the specialized nature of the social work profession, in practice in the classification of jobs due support and recognition to the profession is barely adequate to promote professionalism

in the subject area. As in Malaysia, a new era of professionalism in social work premised on competency-based best practices needs to be initiated without delay.

For this the measures that are need to be addressed urgently are the;

i) Enactment of a Social Workers Act to implement the competency standards;

iii) Establishment of a Social Work Council under the Act to regulate competency of social work practitioners and educators;

iv) Initiation of standardized programs for social work education in institutions of higher learning;

v)  Recruitment of qualified social workers into the public sector;

vi) Upgrading of the National Institute of Social Development the premier institution in social work education in Sri Lanka by affiliating it to a University to obtain better recognition for social work among various disciplines and professions.

vii) Activating the existing professional associations in social work to help the professional social workers to gain their due status (promotion, salary increase).

xi) Initiation of awareness programs to demonstrate the true and positive nature of professional social work among administrators, policy makers and managers of human service organizations

x) Engagement in propaganda for marketing professional social work in the public, non- profit and private sectors.

xi) Building and strengthening of political will to engage in building the value base of the profession to reach sustainable social development in the country

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**The similarities and differences among professional social workers vs. functional social workers in the social work disciplines in Sri Lanka**

Anuradha Wickramasinghe

**Introduction**

This study is conducted to comprehend the similarities and differences among professional social workers vs. functional social workers in the social work disciplines in the Sri Lankan society. For any profession, educational background is essential. There are no bachelor's or master's degree programme in existing universities in Sri Lanka hence no wider place is given to social work education in the country. Furthermore Sri Lanka is lacking the services of professional social workers. In this context Sri Lanka has three categories of social workers who are involved in social change and social welfare process to various extents.

- The first category is the government social development officers. Most of the social work professionals are the product of National Institute of Social Development (NISD) and also art degree holders of conventional universities of the country. NISD is a government institution that provides facilities for social work education based on social welfare agenda of the Government and it has recruiting Social service ministry officials for study in NISD.

- In addition they have offered few places for other government institutions and NGOs to study their courses. In contrast to this, there is a network of functional social workers under the NGO set up. This makes up the second category of social workers. They do not have legal rights or administrative power but working under the democratic rights of the country with a lesser amount of influence in the Sri Lankan society.

- The third category is the most important and well recognised social workers. They are the Buddhist monks and other spiritual leaders of different denominations. For this study only Buddhist monks were selected due to the fact that 74% of Sri Lankans are Buddhists.

**Objective**

The main objective of this study is to analyse the services of Buddhist monk as functional social worker and to compare his social work role with other professional social workers. The research is quite encouraging. The Buddhist monks' social work role is well accepted by the society, it goes beyond the boundaries of legal, administrative and industrial social work norms that had been outlined by western social work professionals. One important factor that analyzed by research study is the supreme role of Buddhist monk in the social development process. Social development is inherited to Buddhist monks since a monk puts his robes first time in his life. This research study is only for the functional social work practices of Sri Lankan Buddhist monks and its compare with professional social work and the practitioners in Sri Lankan context.

**Research method**

For the study we have selected 25 Buddhist monks and 20 social welfare officers of the Government who work in different social development sectors throughout the country. They were interviewed and their services were analyzed. In addition many observations had been made for their services by visiting rural areas. Two symposia had been organised by participation of Buddhist scholars to share the ideas of the social work role of Buddhist monks and its impact to the society. In addition, we have made many references on subject matter documents, research papers, different books and legal documents.

## 1.0. Background Information

**Social and Economic Sketch of Sri Lanka**

Following are some facts about Sri Lanka,

- Sri Lanka is a multi-ethnic and multi religious country her population comprises of70.3% Buddhists, 12.6% Hindus, 9.7% Muslims and 7.4% Christians.(DCSGSL, 2011).

- The Government of Sri Lanka has claimed, Sri Lanka as a middle level income earning country, per capita income of the country has exceeded U$2400 in 2011.(CBGSL, 2011)

- Sri Lanka has highest literacy rate in South Asia and it is 94% in 2011.

- Comparing with other South Asian countries and based on Poverty Head Count Index (HCI) of Sri Lanka, only 15.2% of population is living in below the poverty line.

- Economically active population in Sri Lanka are 65.8 and of them, female representation is 32.2 (CBGSL, 2011).

- According to the Department of Census and Statistics of Sri Lanka, from 21.4million of total population of the country (2010) 23.3 percent are living in females headed households. It is a very clear fact, that in the rural sector, these female headed households are living in below the poverty line. Their income earning is only U$ 84.00 per month.

- One of the demographic features of Sri Lankan population is 60.5% people are in the age group of 15 to 54. It means that, this is the vast majority of the population are involved in education, Agriculture, industry and service sectors.

**Education**

There is a clear relationship between the education and the poverty in Sri Lanka. The Constitution of Sri Lanka indicates that the education for all is a pre-condition for well-being of her people. The education is inversely correlated with poverty in Sri Lanka. The poverty is highest among the population living in households without education and the lowest when the head has an educational background. The poor persons belong to the households whose heads had schooling up to grade 5 to 10 is 42.2percent. On the other hand, the persons belong to the households whose heads had completed G.C.E. (O.L.) and above are only 12.4 percent. It is a very clear fact that one of the root courses in poverty in Sri Lanka is the lack of education or low level education. (WB, 2010)

Although there is a provision in the constitution as "Education for all", the education system has never provided equal opportunities for all in the country. From GCE (OL) examination only 40% is annually qualified for the Advanced level and 60% get dropped out of the system. On average, the dropping out figure is 270,000 students annually. Of the qualified 180,000 students, only 50.5%complete GCE (AL) examination with sufficient marks to enter higher education institutions, out of them only 16% of them are obtaining the eligibility for admission to university as others are dropped due to low marks.( MHEGSL, 2010) This is a very unjust situation and in this process more than 400,000 students in each year lose higher education opportunities and enter to society with frustration, perverseness, lack of self-confidence and broken intentions regarding their future. Unproductive educational system in Sri Lanka was one of the root courses in bloody youth uprisings in the country.

**Youth Uprisings**

In 1971, 1998 to 1989 and also since 1983 to 2009, Sri Lanka has experienced two youth uprisings and one separatist movement. More than 100,000 youth have sacrificed their lives by involving these fascists 'and antisocial movements. In addition 23 graduates who worked as social workers have scarified their lives for unrealistic insurgency movement in 1971,1988 and 1989. They have deviated from their main purpose of social workers they believed the social change thorough armed struggle. For their unrealistic dream, the privileges and the facilities as government officers had been hindered by fascist movement due to deviating primarily accepted key function of social work such as case work, group work and community organizations. These social workers had been assigned by the Government to facilitate the community development activities under the welfare state. (Youth Commission Report 2000)

**Present social work force**

At present more than 700 social workers are working in divisional, district and national level administration of the Government. In addition more than 460 NGOs are also working for the social welfare and social development. NGOs workforce is exceeding 6000 members.  Inherited with historical devolution, as mentioned earlier one of the main streams and the work force in the social development process in the country are the Buddhist Monks. At present, including the nuns, 49000 Buddhist monks (BCDGSL2010) are engaged in social development process based on their historically devolved traditions and value systems. In Sri Lankan History, the Buddhist monks engaged in practical social work doctoring for more than 2000 years without any influences from any external forces. Since 16th century, the Buddhist doctrine based social work process was drastically changed due to European political and religious invasion. Due to this cruel invasion the historical relationship with the people and the temple was violated and generation of smooth development of Buddhist social work process has faced severe challenges. After 400 years of colonial rule, when Sri Lanka  gained political independence in 1948 fragments of European influences were left in the Sri Lankan Society. Just after four years, in 1952, institutionalized social work process has commenced with the Government legislations in the country. After 64 years of independent, Sri Lanka had been reached at the following social and economic juncture at global human development index with the external political and social influences. (See table 1 )

**Figure 1**

# Sri Lanka at a glance

3/29/12

| POVERTY and SOCIAL | | Sri Lanka | South Asia | Lower-middle-income |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **2010** | | | | |
| Population, mid-year *(millions)* | | 20.9 | 1,633 | 2,519 |
| GNI per capita *(Atlas method, US$)* | | 2,240 | 1,176 | 1,619 |
| GNI *(Atlas method, US$ billions)* | | 46.7 | 1,920 | 4,078 |
| **Average annual growth, 2004-10** | | | | |
| Population *(%)* | | 1.0 | 1.5 | 1.6 |
| Labor force *(%)* | | 1.2 | 1.1 | 1.4 |
| **Most recent estimate (latest year available, 2004-10)** | | | | |
| Poverty *(% of population below national poverty line)* | | 9 | .. | .. |
| Urban population *(% of total population)* | | 15 | 30 | 39 |
| Life expectancy at birth *(years)* | | 75 | 65 | 65 |
| Infant mortality *(per 1,000 live births)* | | 14 | 52 | 50 |
| Child malnutrition *(% of children under 5)* | | 22 | 33 | 25 |
| Access to an improved water source *(% of population)* | | 91 | 90 | 87 |
| Literacy *(% of population age 15+)* | | 91 | 61 | 71 |
| Gross primary enrollment *(% of school-age population)* | | 99 | 110 | 107 |
| Male | | 99 | 113 | 110 |
| Female | | 99 | 107 | 104 |

**Development diamond***

Life expectancy

GNI per capita — Gross primary enrollment

Access to improved water source

— Sri Lanka
— Lower-middle-income group

**KEY ECONOMIC RATIOS and LONG-TERM TRENDS**

| | | 1990 | 2000 | 2009 | 2010 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GDP *(US$ billions)* | | 8.0 | 16.3 | 42.1 | 49.6 |
| Gross capital formation/GDP | | 22.2 | 28.0 | 24.4 | 27.8 |
| Exports of goods and services/GDP | | 30.2 | 39.0 | 21.3 | 21.7 |
| Gross domestic savings/GDP | | 14.3 | 17.4 | 17.9 | 18.7 |
| Gross national savings/GDP | | 20.3 | 21.5 | 23.9 | 24.8 |
| Current account balance/GDP | | -5.6 | -6.5 | -0.5 | -2.9 |
| Interest payments/GDP | | 2.1 | 1.5 | 0.8 | 1.4 |
| Total debt/GDP | | 73.0 | 55.6 | 40.9 | 41.3 |
| Total debt service/exports | | 13.5 | 10.1 | 10.1 | 9.4 |
| Present value of debt/GDP | | .. | .. | .. | 32.1 |
| Present value of debt/exports | | .. | .. | .. | 102.9 |

**Economic ratios***

Trade

Domestic savings — Capital

Indebtedness

— Sri Lanka
— Lower-middle-income group

| | 1990-00 | 2000-10 | 2009 | 2010 | 2010-14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *(average annual growth)* | | | | | |
| GDP | 5.3 | 5.6 | 3.5 | 8.0 | 7.3 |
| GDP per capita | 4.5 | 4.5 | 2.6 | 7.0 | 6.5 |
| Exports of goods and services | 7.5 | 3.1 | -12.3 | 5.8 | 18.4 |

Development Economics LDB database, World Bank group, 2010

## Selected Social and Economic Development Indicators
## After 64 years of Political Independence in Sri Lanka 2011-2012

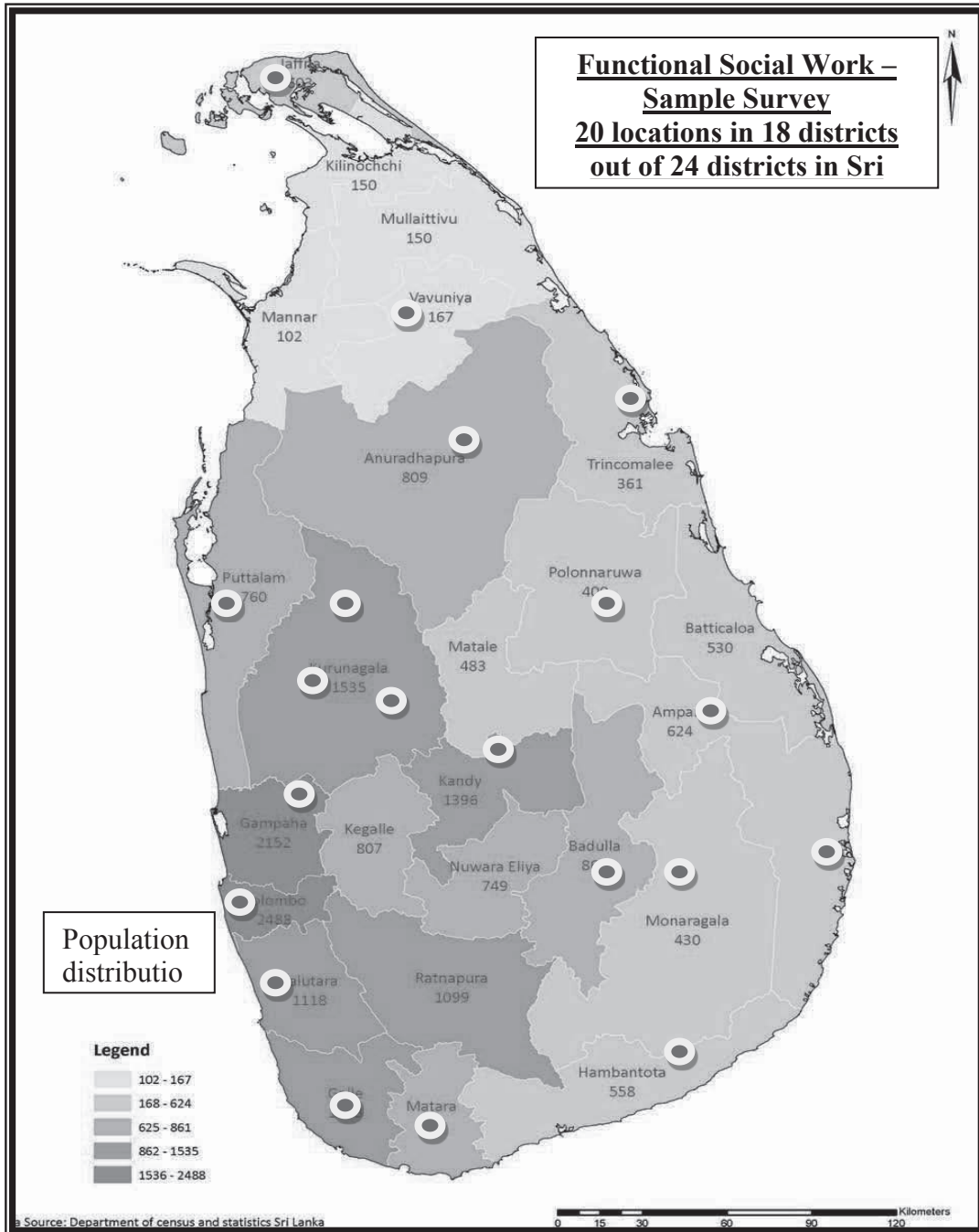| UN Human development Index( MEDIAM) | 0.691 Rank 97 |
|---|---|

**Table1**

| INDICATORS | PRECENTAGE | INDICATORS | PERCENTAGE |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Demographic Data** | **%** | **Education** | **%** |
| Total Population | 21.4 million | Literacy rate | 94.0 |
| Population Growth rate | 1.0 | No schooling | 6.2 |
| Life expectancy | 76.4 | Qualified for Higher education | 23.08 |
| Death rate per 1000 | 4.4 | Qualified for University entrance | 16.26 |
| Infant mortality per 1000 | 9.4 | Unemployment | 4.8 |
| **Economy** | **%** | **Basic needs & Facilities** | **%** |
| Annual economic Growth rate | 6.5 | Availability of houses | 62.0 |
| Economically active population | 65.8 | Availability of pipe born water for house hold | 72.0 |
| Female representation in economic activities | 31.2 | Availability of Electricity for households | 80.0 |
| Percentage share for major economic activities for grows domestic products | Agriculture 11.6 Industry 29.3 Service 59.1 | Availability of Telephone per 100 persons | 63.8 |
| Households expenditure For food from total earning | 79.0 | Availability of Television of households | 82.4 |
| Per capita Income | US 2400/= | | |

| Health & Sanitation | % | Disability | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Women Under weight | **29.0** | Disability from Total Population | 1.6 |
| Children Under nutrition and stunting | **24.0** | Begging for livelihood | 0.4 |
| Micronutrient deficiency anemia of women | **41.0** | Supported by NGOs | 6.2 |
| Under nourished women | **21.0** | Supported by families | 73.3 |
| Total fertility rate | 2.3 | No schooling | 31.6 |
| Hospital beds for 1000 people | **3.1** | Employed | 14.4 |
| Access for medicine | **95.0** | **Gender Balance** | **%** |
| Access to sanitation | 89.0 | **Physical violence** | **27.0** |
| Physicians per 1000 people | **0.55** | **Decision making level jobs** | **23.0** |
| Mental disorder | 2.3 | **Neglecting children by women** | **18.0** |
| Average KCAL intake( daily) | 2390KCAL | **Girl Child abuse** | **8.0** |
| **Social workers and social work education** | **%** | Functional social workers( Buddhist Monks) | |
| Professional social workers | 1.0 per 669 persons | No of Buddhist monks/nuns in Sri Lanka | 49,000 |
| NGO social workers | 1.0 per 440 families | No of Buddhist monks work as functional social workers | 1.0 per 384 families |
| Enrolments to Professional social work education | 1.0 per 366,000 persons | Buddhist Monks run Early learning centers | 10600 |
| Working fields of Professional Social work | 21* | No of temples associated with social work | 12100 |
| No of School of social works | 1 per 21.4millionpeople | School of social work for Buddhist monks | non |

**Sources: Central Bank, Sri Lanka Annual Reports 2010/2011, Human Development Unit, World Bank 2007**
**Buddhist Commissioners Department reports SLG 2010**
**UNIFA Report 2008, UNICEF Annual Reports 2010/ 2011, UN human Development Index 2011**
**Department of Census and Statistics Report SLG, 2011/2010 WHO Annual Reports 2011/2010**

**Figure 2**

1.3 Sample survey locations



**Functional Social Work –
Sample Survey
20 locations in 18 districts
out of 24 districts in Sri**

Jaffna

Kilinochchi
150

Mullaittivu
150

Vavuniya
167

Mannar
102

Anuradhapura
809

Trincomalee
361

Puttalam
760

Polonnaruwa
40

Matale
483

Batticaloa
530

Kurunagala
1535

Ampa
624

Kandy
1398

Gampaha
2152

Kegalle
807

Badulla
8

Nuwara Eliya
749

Colombo
2488

Monaragala
430

Population
distributio

Kalutara
1118

Ratnapura
1099

Galle

Matara

Hambantota
558

**Legend**

102 - 167
168 - 624
625 - 861
862 - 1535
1536 - 2488

a Source: Department of census and statistics Sri Lanka

Kilometers
0   15   30   60   90   120

- **Main Buddhist temples in the districts that are associated with functional Social Work .See the annexure (1) for names and locations of the temples**

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**1.3. Social change or Social welfare -Literature review**

Social change is a dynamic process which involves in structural adjustment to eliminate all the root courses that involves in the problems face by a person or the society. Social welfare involves in maintaining the social wellbeing in the society. Both these systems need social work as an instrument to alleviate the problems faced by individual or the society. It's commencing with education and facilitation with professional involvement. This has indicated by William Schwartz in his article of "the social worker in the group" presented in" social work process" (1979, p 14 – 28) According to Schwartz "every profession has a particular function to perform in society."Further he argued the interest of individual and the interest of society are essentially same, but that in complex and changing society, the individual desires to belong as full and productive member and the societies' ability to integrate and enrich its people are sometimes blocked. Social work intervention is directed toward these blockages and toward freeing the individuals, impetus toward health, growth and belonging and the organized efforts of society to integrate its parts in to a productive and dynamic whole. According to "under graduate social work curriculum development project of the School of Social work of West Virginia University" (1978 p.68) indicated that "Social work education enhanced the problem solving, coping and development capacities of people. In addition social work education link people with system that provide them resources, services and opportunities."

Both Schwartz's argument and the elaboration of the social work curriculum of School of Social work of West Virginia University have never provided an empirical meaning for what Sri Lanka has practiced during 60 years of "social work" intervention in the country. We are far away to achieve these goals of social change and its instrument of professional social workers. And therefore, what we can discuss here is the social welfare and the social welfare workers that we have practiced last six decades. The reason was that Sri Lanka has never experienced the involvement of professional social workers or social work education in social change in her social welfare history since 1952. Social work and social work professions are amalgamated with volunteerism and professional occupations. Social worker is a practitioner and not a worker in a factory or in a farm. Social work

profession has the following characteristics are indicated in "Social work Process" . (Compton and Galaway 1979 p37,)

(1) Primary orientation to community interest rather than the individual self-interest, (2) A culture including value system (3)A high degree of skills involving responsibility and self-regulation of behavior that are associated with formal education, work socialization, codes of ethics and voluntary association operated by professionals by themselves. Social work Process argued that, the social work as human service profession.

The social work professionals should have the occupational knowledge in ideology, social systems and social transformation based on normal three tire structure of case work, group work and community organizations that are widely accepted by social work profession. This is a very lacking quality and practice in Government introduced social service and social welfare system in Sri Lanka. Social change begin with changing the ideology, believes, perceptions and attitudes of the clients. For this purpose social worker should have the skills to maintain the practitioner and client relationship. According to these parameters, 60 years of Sri Lankan Social work history has never facilitated to create social work professional occupations in the country. Now the 21st century requirement is to adopt, introduce, facilitate and provide the required legal and administrative base to upgrade the social development process in the country.

Sri Lanka needs professional social workers to attend to the needs of a problem ridden society. (Abysekara, 2008, p.27) for this purpose, code of ethics and professional occupations must be introduced for social development by abolishing the welfare state policies and activities. It needs broad based human investment as an investment in social work professional education and an investment in structural changes. As "Social work Process" ( Compton and Galaway 1979 p 45 .) indicated, social work is a profession concerned with the impact of social problems and therefore the empirical research findings must be used as way of knowledge building, structural change and formulate legal systems for social work by the Government and the State authorities. Social work practice is for seek out, identify and strengthen the maximum potentials in individuals, groups and communities for desired results.(The commission on Practice of the National association of Social workers ,1958) . At the international definition of social work review (Akimoto, 2010) argued "our

cultural and contextual differences are emphasized on definition of social work and process of social work profession". According to Lord Buddha's first advise to his followers was "humankind is suffering from physical and mental illness and therefore they needs direction, guidance and path to face these illnesses. For this purpose you must carry the solution for alleviate the suffering."

( Palihakara, K.S  2008 p16 )

=================================================================

**"*Right* Action**

**The Right Action forms a list of fundamental ethical behaviours all practicing Buddhists should follow. These are the <u>Five Precepts</u>:**

> 1. **To refrain from destroying living beings**
>
> 2. **To refrain from stealing**
>
> 3. **To refrain from sexual misconduct (adultery, rape, etc.)**
>
> 4. **To refrain from false speech (lying)**
>
> 5. **To refrain from intoxicants which lead to heedlessness**

**Right Livelihood**

**Those seeking enlightenment should pick the Right Livelihood to support the other fundamentals of Buddhism. Followers should avoid employment in positions where their actions may cause harm to others, be it directly or indirectly"**

> - **Genuine Buddhism leads to social work education and practices.**

**2.0. Social work – Sri Lankan Perspective**

**2.1. Conceptual Domain –Social work Education and Social worker**

Social work education creates socially responsible, culturally adoptable and environmentally friendly social workers who changed the thinking pattern and the behaviour of the people and the community. The main positive impacts of the behaviour of social workers are, they learn by doing, following the values and practicing the skills. They are the key facilitators on social transformation and are very efficient to facilitate for sustainable development within the cultural social and ecological domains. For any occasions or any activities of the society, when social workers are involved and facilitated, the community has claimed that we have reached at the purpose. This was the fundamental in social work education. But under the contemporarily education system, social work education has never given a wider place in Sri Lanka. In Sri Lankan perspective the Social work education is limited only for social services under the government influence and produced graduates and diploma holders for the jobs to provide government welfare services to the community. But the universal concept and its empirical applicability is social work education is not for job creation and it's for social transformation and sustainable development of human kind. The commission on Practice of the National association of Social workers (1958) indicated that social work practice is for seek out, identify and strengthen the maximum potentials in individuals, groups and communities for desired results.

**2.2. Historical Perspective**

With the introduction of Buddhism in 3rdCentury BC, (Mahawansa) the connection between religions, culture, language, social work and education and their combined influence on national identity has been an age-old pervasive force for the Sri Lankan Buddhists. Sri Lankan rulers employed King Asoka's strategy of merging the political state with Buddhism, supporting Buddhist institutions from the state's coffers, and locating temples close to the royal palace for greater control. With such patronage, Buddhism was positioned to evolve as the highest ethical and philosophical expression of Sinhalese culture and civilization. Buddhism appealed directly to the masses, leading to the growth of a collective Sinhalese cultural consciousness. Historically in Sri Lanka, the Buddhist monk was the social worker and Temple was the social work practiced place.

(Ellawala H, 1976 p.67,)There were 23000 villages and in each village, had a temple and lived Buddhist monks at least as one monk at a temple.

In addition as head of the temple, the monk was the head of the village elders' council. Since 300BC to 1505 AD, the village elder's council was the politically accepted village development organisation that provided required resources to community to manage the social and economic activities of the villages.

During this era the education system in the village and also in the country was purely in the hands of Buddhist monks facilitated by village elders' council. The village elders are not agedly matured people and they were the professional in different development domains.(Perera E., 2007,p.48) This scenario was changed after 1505 AD(De Silva, 1967 p 72 ) due to western influence with the occupation of missionaries. The Buddhist monks headed education system had a complex purpose of building nation focusing entire society. To reach at this purpose, they have run a mutually interrelated organisation system for education by managing main institution, three provincial campuses with 8 faculties, 16 regional campuses, 284 collages at divisional level and 23,000 village based centres. This organisational mechanism for education was developed, introduced and nurtured for more than 16 centuries with the following four elements of education and they can be categorised as follows.

The first element of Buddhist monks headed education was the personality development, behaviour transformation with discipline, moral values and building self-dignity of a person. The Second element was focused family cohesion and socialisation, building social justice, and delivered benefits to the society (Paranawithan, S. 1967 P.18 ). The third one was tertiary knowledgebase, indigenous knowledge system, skill development with cooperative model of organisation –sharing labour and sharing the dividend. The fourth was nation building, alleviation of hunger and poverty and also ecologically balance sustainable development. Until sixteenth centaury AD, the Buddhist Monks headed education system was the key in all aspects in development in Sri Lanka. After the influence of western social work model, the Buddhist monks headed social value system was gradually collapsed or uprooted purposely and sows the seeds of westernised social education system back by Christian priest and western model NGOs. Through the land reclamation act of 1932,

which was introduced by the British had been abolished all the traditional value system that encompasses sustainable social and economic development process in the country.

## 2.3. Facilitation to welfare Society

Few centuries of colonial rule, Sri Lanka gained independence in 1948.The Buddhist traditions based society was disorganised at that time and therefore the subsequent governments have adopted the principles and values of western model social education system. Sri Lankan scholars and the professionals who studied in west have forecasted the theories and practices to maintain welfare state and capitalistic political ideology based on which they have learnt from the West. With their western ideology and the policy planning the main thrust of the government was to facilitate for maintenance of welfare society. For this purpose the instrument was the social worker and social work education. (Abesekara, D 2008 P89-107)Social work profession and social work education was institutionalised by the legislation (1952) in Sri Lanka and reached at twenty first century with a very complex situation by diminishing its dynamism and commitment. The government facilitated "social works" has brought the results in neutralizing social movement against the capitalistic political ideology in social welfare. The historical dynamism of social work profession is when the social workers are facilitated for any actions. The community is saying that we have done the things. The commitment is the "availability" of social workers at any time and at any occasions of the community. This dynamic working process in the society had been demonstrated by the Buddhist monks more than centuries. At present no value for both these fundamental standards of social work profession. In Sri Lankan context the social work profession is deteriorating due to bureaucratic intervention in social work and institutionalization of social work profession under the government.

After 1952, in six decade of professional social work history, social work education principles and practices were nurtured and developed under the hands of government policies and its officials. At present social work and social work education is government owned, always practiced, implemented under the government institutional frame work with administrative and financial regulations for political motives. No "social workers" in the government are social development officers and always activate on their higher authorities by following the rules and regulations

within eight hours working schedule. Most of the programmes they have implemented are politically motivated to maintain the welfare of the society. As part of government welfare schemes, over sixty years of development, social work profession faced much difficulty in delivering the community centred results due to very leaner attempt to integrate historical traditions, indigenous knowledge systems and historical devolution of social work profession in Sri Lanka. In this disintegration in six decades of government facilitated social works, the result was less respect and stagnation of social work process and the social work profession in Sri Lankan society. If we analyze deeply, due to lack of proper social work education and social work professions, Sri Lankan society has experienced an enculturation and deprivation in compare with other nations in Asia and Pacific. And therefore the reforms and new initiatives are needed for reshape and restructure of social work profession in Sri Lanka.

## 2.4. Reforms in Social Work Education

After political independence from colonial rulers the political reforms and education reforms came in to effect. Free education system was introduced but until mid-seventies, the principles of formal education system have never changed. Sri Lanka was a welfare state and all the sectors in development including education systems were also geared toward to fulfil the needs of welfare society. During seventies, curriculum have changed in the universities and introduced development education focusing the needs of manpower in the welfare of country. The same time social work education also introduced through Institute of social development under the Ministry of Social development. This was a bureaucratic intervention and Secretary to Ministry was the head of the implementation process of the social development and social development education. The government officers obtaining chances to study at the Social Development Institute to fulfil the mandate of Social development Ministry and attached to divisional secretariats or different Government Departments who have implemented social welfare development activities.

At present "social worker's job is unrecognised in holistic development context in Sri Lanka. Social work is not a job oriented profession. In contemporary society it can be a key device in social and economic empowerment process. Social worker must define and change the unorthodox and stagnated value systems in to reality. To reach at this difficult task, Social work education is

providing the knowledge, skills and attitudes to Social worker. Therefore first of all social work profession and social work education in Sri Lanka must be independent from government intervention and it must be non-governmental in operation. It is not an academic or administrative job. It is a tertiary in profession. The principles and practices of social work education must be introduced and incorporated with primary education up to university level. When you studied the social work education curricular, you can see different theories and teaching of different schools in west. Theories are not denied. But these theories must be domesticated with native knowledgebase. Social work education is a part of human development knowledge system and it must be incorporated in higher education Institutions of the country. BSW and MSW graduates must be deployed in all the development sectors with decision making responsibility. Social worker is not a channel to supply reliefs during the disasters or maintain the welfare of the society under the political agenda. Actually he or she is a different kind of relief worker as all the sections of mental to physical reliefs of human kind. His or her profession must be upgraded in the service sectors. Social worker is the architect of the society. He or she must be practiced the profession, because it is prestigious profession in the society. This recognition must be built by the Government genuinely by reforming the decades old existing legal system and knowledgebase of the country.

## 2.5. Agenda never completed

Intentionally or unintentionally the social work and social work education has never considered as a main stream on building hopes for the future of the younger generation in Sri Lanka. In addition, the historical perspectives and indigenous knowledge system on social work have also never been incorporated with contemporary social work .The Sri Lankan social work practitioners are greatly considered  the  social work education as the foundation for social sustainability in the country. And therefore the social work education is inseparable from any of restructuring process of education that focused sustainable development in Sri Lanka. The national experience in lack of socialization training and fewer attempts on building behavioral disciplines of the younger generation caused on their involvement in antisocial movements. This is due to inappropriate curriculums and less opportunities for social work education.

The root causes of antisocial movements are never properly assessed and never considered for education reforms that recently introduced. The reforms are taken place only in Technical and Vocational education sectors. The opportunities in this sector are widened for younger generation. For this purpose vocational education system had been restructured with new vision, new curriculums, facilities and opportunities. Admissions for vocational education have simplified and training outlets are inaugurated. In addition professional validation has granted by introducing "NVQ" – National Vocational Qualification and institutional framework for the Technical and Vocational Education with Training (TVET).

Conventional universities have never offered social work education degrees. Only NISD offered, Diplomas, BSW, MSW for social work education accepted by University Grant Commission of Sri Lanka. Only 1: 421000 people are getting eligibility for social work education in NISD. NISD is the only social work development higher education institution in the country which directly attached to Social Services Ministry. Social work education is a part of human development knowledge system and must be separated from the political agenda of the ruling parties and incorporated into higher education system of the country with more recruits from the civil society. At present NISD's 90% opportunities are available only for government officials who intend to improve their professional skills and small percentage is officered for external people from the Social Services Ministry.

Our argument is BSW and MSW graduates must be deployed in all the development sectors with decision making responsibility. Social worker is not a channel to supply reliefs during the disasters or maintain the welfare of the society under the political agenda. Actually he or she is a different kind of relief worker as all the sections of mental to physical reliefs of human kind. His or her profession must be upgraded in the service sectors. Social worker is the architect of the society. He or she must be practiced the profession, because it is prestigious profession in the society. This recognition must be built by the government genuinely by reforming the decade's old existing legal system and knowledgebase on social work of the country, that suit to 21$^{st}$centuryneeds of the society.

**3.0. Functional Social Work**

**3.1 Conceptual Domain**

Buddhism based functional social work education creates socially responsible, culturally adoptable and environmentally friendly social workers who change the thinking pattern and the behaviour of the people and the community. Their main thrust is social change. The main positive impacts of the behaviour of functional social workers are, they have learned by doing, following the values and practicing the skills. They are the key facilitators on social transformation and are very efficient to facilitate for sustainable development within the cultural social and ecological domains. For any occasions or any activities of the society, when social workers are involved and facilitated, the community has claimed that we have reached at the purpose. This was the fundamental in social work education. But under the contemporary education system, social work education has never given a wider place in Sri Lanka. In Sri Lankan perspective the Social work education is limited only for social services under the government influence and produces graduates and diploma holders for the jobs to provide government welfare services to the community. But the universal concept and its empirical applicability is social work education is not for job creation and it's for social transformation and sustainable development of human kind.

**3.2.  Definition on functional social work**

"**Functional social work introduces the path to alleviate the mental and physical sufferings that are fasces by human being. This path inculcates the social workers with a vision, mission, strategy and the policies to change the human behavior to eliminate all kind of social sufferings**". This definition is based on Buddhist teaching on social change. In Sri Lankan context, it is not possible to deviate from Buddhist teaching on social work. Buddhist teaching and Buddhist monks were the main instruments for social change for 16 centuries without any external socio cultural interventions. During last 500 years, under the influence of western based philosophical interventions, still the Buddhist teaching based social work ideologies and it practices has never changed. The contemporary society in Sri Lanka, the Buddhist teaching and value system has widely accepted for social building process. The Buddhist temples and the monks are saviors for the community at manmade or environment disasters at any time or any occasions. Buddhist

teaching based functional social work has a value system. These value systems are embodied as the people are equal by birth. This equality has diminished due to manmade social structures by creating social illness. Therefore equalization principles are adopted in Buddhist teaching base social work to eliminate all kind of social suffering in the society.

### 3.3. Buddhist monk as social worker

This study is based on the Buddhist monk and his role in contemporary society in Sri Lanka. There are many other NGOs and social organizations are engaged in social work without recognition of social work Institutions. We will not discuss their role and function due to our limitation on the study and our focus is only the Sri Lankan Buddhist monks.

### 3.3.1 Identification of Sri Lankan Buddhist monks

He is fully away from his own home and has single life dedicated to Buddhist principles and devoted attendant of the Buddha**(Rahula W. 1959 p.18)** His prime task is **to** engage in  introducing of  noble eight fold path to society for social liberation. The monk has a message to deliver to people. That is "Human position is supreme. Man is his own master and there is no higher being or power that sits in judgment over his destiny. Introducing by  Most Venerable Mahinda the  King Asokas' son  on  3rd century BC,  his doctoring is embodied in all the humanities in diversified society in Sri Lanka.( Mahawansa) The monk always taught, encouraged and stimulated each person to develop himself, and to work out his own emancipation, for men and women have the power to liberate himself or herself from all bondage through his or her own personal effort and intelligence. This is the real social change. Comparing all the western or eastern models on social work profession, there is no this kind of doctrine for the social workers to follow or social workers similar to Buddhist monks. In Sri Lanka, more than 40000 monks are scattered in 23000 villages around the country and working with the community for their social liberation in diversified activities

### 3.3.2. Temples and Buddhist monks

Functional alternative social work in Sri Lanka is based on the "temples of Buddhist monks". The temples are the place where the Buddhist monks are resided and the community has visiting the temples for their social and spiritual needs. The study is limited to Buddhist monks' role in social work. it has never attempt to inspect the NGOs and other stake holders who involved in functional

alternative social work. Historically in Sri Lankan Buddhist society, the Buddhist monks have three sets of works. First of all, he is a spiritual leader that provided mental satisfaction to the community. Secondly he is a facilitator for social change and empowerment process and also involved to maintain the social welfare system in the village. Thirdly he is a "social entrepreneur" building the society by organizing and nurturing the collaborative efforts in the society by facilitating for improvement of social skills to share the benefits equally in the society. Therefore this study is a timely intervention to inquire, assess and incorporate historical wisdom, process and practices of social work with modern social work and functional alternative social work. Actually it is not the functional alternative social work and it is the historical identification with the real roots on social work and social work profession in a country or in a society like Sri Lanka, with outstanding historical journey for more than 25 centauries.

### 3.3.3. The Role of Buddhist monks

The research team has discovered the followings from the study. Only 2% of monks are involved in politics and 7% monks are engaged purely religious activities focusing the spiritual needs of the community. But all other monks- 91% are heading toward social development and they are promoting the right action aims at moral, honorable and peace full conduct in the society. It can be revealed that the Buddhist monks in Sri Lanka are not only the priests. 74% of the Buddhist community in Sri Lanka expects his services in the society as illustrated in table 2 (see table 2). In addition, he is engaged in labor activities, health development – especially cancer hospital development activities, child rights protection activities, organic agriculture development activities and forest conservation and ecological protection activities. Simultaneously, these monks are engaged in their religious function as spiritual leaders. According to Buddhism, for men or women to be perfect, there are two qualities that he or she should be developed equally. They are compassion in one side and wisdom is other (Rahula, W .1959). Compassion represents the basic principles of social work profession- they are charity, love, and kindness, tolerance on the emotional side or qualities of the heart. Second quality is the wisdom in intellectual side or the qualities of mind. The social workers must develop both these qualities to be perfect in their discipline.

The monks in Sri Lanka are very well regarded for their qualities on charity and qualities on intellectuality. Of 49000 monks in Sri Lanka, 98% are completed their higher education up to graduate and post graduate level. Most of them completed sociology as subject in addition to Buddhist and other eastern subjects. Some of the monks are holding very senior academic positions in the universities and higher education institutions of the country. Due to lack of institutional facilities and lack of developed curriculum in social work, and also limited opportunities in NISD, most of the monks are studied in conventional universities. Contemporary universities in Sri Lanka do not offer BSW or MSW courses (Abeysekara, W. 2008 p 90-124).This is due to low demand of the students, lack of social acceptance and also lack of lucrative job opportunities in the job market.

At the Sinhalese villages, saviors are the Buddhist monks. For any family disputes, misunderstanding or conflicts, the Buddhist monks are the socially accepted arbitrators. The Sri Lankan Buddhist society accepted his arbitration without questioning. Monks' decisions are well accepted. In the natural disasters, Buddhist monks' role is highly regarded. Sri Lanka has been experiencing very different natural and anthropogenic disasters during its long history. In the event of facing such calamities, the Sri Lankan society with a strong Buddhist foundation has relied on, Buddhist monks as pioneers in voluntary services particularly for the provision of security and assistance to the victims. During 1958 flood and 2004 Tsunami disasters monks were involved providing security, shelters, medicine and food for the victims before any other social workers or social institutions interfered.

### 3.3.4 Identification of Buddhist monks headed social work

In this study the Buddhist Monks headed social work as identified by the research team and the information accumulated can be illustrated in a following table as follows.

Table 2. Buddhist monks headed social work in Sri Lanka

| no | Activities | Clint | Purpose | Monks are Responsible for |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Child focus- | | | |
| 1.1. | Early learning centre's | Age 2-5 children | Future citizen in a just society | Running more than 14000 Early learning centers. |
| 1.2. | Sunday schools | Age 5 to 18 | | Running 28000 Sunday schools |
| 1.3. | Children homes | Ages 5 to 18 | | Running 12 children's homes |
| 1.4. | Child protection Activities | From all ages children | | Awakening activities-67% |
| 2. | Women focus | Unprivileged women | Socially and economically Empowered women | |
| 2.1. | Women based community organizations | Widows/Destitute women/ Socially and Economically disadvantage women | | 23000 women based community organizations |
| 2.2. | Promotion of women rights | From all ages women | | Awakening activities- 51% |
| 3.0. | Ageing Problems | Needy elders in both sex | | |
| 3.1. | Elderly homes | | Social responsibility | 13 elderly homes |
| 3.2. | Social security | families | | Awakening activities- 89% |
| 4.0. | Youth focus | Youngsters age from 12 to 22- both sex | Future citizen in a just society | |
| 4.1. | Youth clubs | | Building future leaders | 12650 youth clubs |
| 5.0. | Education | All ages | Building just society | 88% monks are engaged |
| 6.0. | Counseling | Youngsters to adults in all ages | Happiness and healthiness | 82% monks are engaged |
| 7.0 | Disaster Management | All members | Security and building hopes | 89% monks are engaged |
| 8.0 | Managing communal disputes | All members in the society | Social security | 90%monks are involved |

**3.4. Research Findings**

**3.4.1. 25 Buddhist Monks**

For this research, 25 active monks in functional social work had been participated. Their work had been observed by the research team and monks had been personally interviewed (See the annexure 01) by the research team. The findings from the interview are as follows.

| No | Indicators | Results |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Educational background | 12 monks have post graduate qualification 13 monks are graduates. No one has the BSW or MSW qualification. The monks graduate studies based on humanities and social science, Buddhist culture and development studies |
| 2. | Work disciplines | Two are vice Chancellors of the Prominent universities.3 monks are senior professors, 4 are school teachers and others are the aborts of the temples. |
| 3. | Time spend for the social work | Fulltime-some days more than 18 hours |
| 4. | Rewards and monitory supports | No rewards and no monitory supports |
| 5. | Empirical applicability | 100% |
| 6. | Reasons on Involvement in social work | No special .Practice Buddhist teaching |
| 7. | Social recognition | Inherited and widely accepted |
| 8. | Social work is extracurricular activity | Part of day to day Buddhist practices |
| 9 | Balance sheet | Negligence, Happiness and tolerance |
| 10 | Future focus | Be a 21$^{st}$ century Buddhist monk without deviating 2600 years old Buddhist teaching |

**3.4.2. 20 Professional Social workers (Government)**

In addition to these Buddhist monks, 20 social workers ( not he professional social workers) who deployed by the Social service Department of Western Provincial council of Sri Lanka Government were also interviewed on their service.

| No | indicators | Results |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Education background | 12 are University graduates /08 are Social development diploma holders |
| 2 | Work discipline | Charity work/Welfare work/Relief work |
| 3 | Time spend | Maximum 8 hours per day or Over time |
| 4 | Reward and Monitory supports | Monthly salary with pension scheme/Foreign tours/ promotions/ |
| 5 | Empirical applicability | moderate |
| 6 | Reason on involvement on social work | As a job/ social security |
| 7. | Social recognition | Due to government power |
| 8 | Social work is extracurricular activity | Part of the job |
| 9 | Balance sheet | Frustration , Promotion and Gratuity |
| 10 | Future focus | Next promotion and be a good government officer |

It is very clear the mission of Buddhist monks headed social work. They are tirelessly working with the community. They do not have limitations or interventions from external forces. Professional social workers job is also clear but they have to fulfill the assigned duties by the government. Social worker must be transferred to another destination but Buddhist monks must be lived in his temple in same village with the community forever. Therefore as functional social worker, monk's duties are inherited to him from generation to generation.

### 4.0. Similarities and differences

The Similarities and the differences of the professional social workers and its functional

alternatives are indicated in the following figure.

### 4.1. Figure 3 Similarities and differences

| Professional social work | Similarities and differences | Functional alternative |
|---|---|---|
| Maintaining Social welfare of the state | | Working for Social change |
| Working under legislative frame work | | Working under traditional value system and accepted teaching |
| Stand for political social welfare with  legislative base | | Stand for historical assignment with  community base |
| Working on assigned duties in the job description | | Working on inherited duties with majority accepted believes and perception |
| Working for salary and income Result oriented and limited time frame | | Voluntary work result oriented fulltime |
| Command to people with state authority and working on vocational norms | | Command to people with spiritual relationship, Spiritual guidance and working on perception |
| Strategy- case work, group work and community organisations- With legislative and administrative leadership | | Strategy Case work, group work and community organisation with spiritual and traditionally accepted  leadership |
| Working in Tertiary discipline with academic background | | Working in Spiritual discipline with academic background |
| No ability to influence for political agenda | | Ability to Influence for political agenda |
| Responsibility  to higher authority on job, solution on paper and referred to next | | Socially Responsible and solutions  are tangible |

Defined and illustrated by Sri Lanka Research Team

### 4.2. The Limitations in social work and social work profession

The research team has better understanding on some of the hindered institutionalize factors that

encompassed the social work and social work professions in Sri Lanka.

First of all, Sri Lanka has never enjoyed the services of professional social workers except the

government appointed social workers. Professional social work is a practice and social worker is a

practitioner. In Sri Lanka we do not have above categories of social workers. Even we do not have

license social workers. Sri Lanka needs more human skills in legal and administrative sectors for the reforms to shape and build social work professional service similar to managers or administrative services in the country.

Secondly social work education must be recognized by the government and Private sector Universities. Sri Lankan university education system is geared toward only for job creation courses and the students have the motivation on higher marks for medicine, engineering, science and management courses focusing lucrative jobs. Universities officer only courses on humanities and social science. Art degrees do not have values for the students in contemporary society. They always need to market their qualifications and always preferred value added courses for building their future. A very marginal some, few marks receivers have go to social studies. And therefore the government must recognize the private and public sector initiatives on social work education and must recognize these initiatives as genuine efforts on social building process and part of social development. Government must be re-structured the social welfare agenda and must go for social structure and its reforms. For this purpose society needs professionals and practical social work agenda.

Thirdly, another assumption is, many functional social workers are accepted by the society and working in the society day and night. The Sri Lankan rural community never feels about the requirement of professional social worker or his services due to the grassroots setting of the country. The Buddhist monk in the village is a fulltime functional social worker and he is always available for the community on request. The monk feels, he must attend for any difficulties of the laymen. May be a family disputes, counseling, health problems, death or natural or unnatural calamities, political or social disputes- whatever the magnitude of the problems, the monk is always with the layman. In addition there are many social service organizations and NGOs are working in the village level and no vacuum at grassroots social bases for professional social workers. Always the functional social workers are leading for social change and social welfare activities. For the urbanized societies in Sri Lanka, still only 22 % of the total population, may need the services of professional due to industrialization process and competition on economic gains.

Finally, major faculties of the society including education, economy and social welfare are politicized badly and therefore whatever steps taking to introduce social work education and social work profession must go to the political agenda. Otherwise, there is no opportunities for materialize the same. Sri Lankan party politics encompasses all the faculties of the society and therefore it needs juridical intervention or political revolution for depoliticize the society and related all the social faculties including the academic and non-academic institutions.

**Conclusion**

This attempt was made to find out the role of the professional social workers and its functional alternatives. In our research study, we have decided to review the Buddhist monks' role as functional social worker in the rural society in Sri Lanka. The study team has worked with twenty five Buddhist monks scattered all over Sri Lanka and twenty social workers in the government sector in the country. The research team feels that social work education, professional social work and professional social workers are the instruments for social welfare purpose of the industrial society or highly urbanized society.

Therefore, no recognition to professional social workers in rural society in Sri Lanka due to their inherited functional social workers- the Buddhist monks. As indicated earlier, the study is focused only on Buddhist monk, his role in the society and observed how they are working freely and systematically without BSW or MSW. These monks are working with accepted academic qualifications and following the Buddha's teaching, well accepted by the Sri Lankan society. The study team has also indicated that comparing the similarities and differences of professional social worker and alternative functional social worker, the much more advanced and reputed social worker is the Buddhist monk because he has the social recognition than the welfare social worker. The study has discussed repeatedly that in Sri Lanka, there are no professional social workers and therefore Buddhist monks led social work is widely accepted with no gaps generated.

It must be noted that it is just the start of this exciting research; we have to go further and must be highlighted to the society about the silence service of Buddhist monks. The case study, group work and community organisations are the fundamental tools in social work profession. But Sri Lankan Buddhist monks have a very powerful tool for the social change. That is the commitment. With this commitment, first and last requirement for 21st century social development process is the structural reforms in education, legal setting, and institutions of the government.

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