

SUMMARY OF GROUP DISCUSSIONS
ON PREPARATION OF SENIOR
AND AUXILIARY PERSONNEL

BY

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The discussions based on Dr. Jean M. Robertson's paper on Staffing Senior Posts and Dr. M. S. Gore's paper on the Contribution of Social Work Education to the Preparation of Village Level Workers were focused on the following selected questions, as all countries appear to share the same problems of a grave shortage qualified personnel at all levels of operation in social welfare programs and services:

1. Should schools of social work attempt to prepare personnel for all levels of operation, such as policy-making and administrative posts, practitioner positions, village level workers, auxiliary personnel, etc., or should they establish priorities and concentrate on the training of personnel for one general level of activity?
2. Most schools of social work now give priority to preparation for the practitioner level. In some countries practitioners rise to administrative and policy-making posts; in other countries, they do not. In the later situation, would there be an advantage in placing major emphasis on the preparation of social workers who would immediately enter senior positions? Should school of social work in countries which are in a beginning or early stage of social welfare development establish the same priorities and give the same emphasis as schools in countries with established social welfare programs and services? If not, what does experience suggest should be the major emphasis in such countries?
3. It is possible to establish educational arrangements within the same country which would meet a variety of training needs, such as, for example, postgraduate preparation for senior level positions, undergraduate preparation for the practitioner level, and special training courses for village level and auxiliary workers? Is there a common core of social work knowledge and skill which is needed by personnel at all levels of operation?

As to the first suggested question, there was general agreement that social work education should be broad generic and flexible to cover administration and wide social work aspects to meet overall needs of the job of social worker to-day. The groups felt the need to have orientation courses, seminars and institutes for agency workers. These are to be organized by schools of social work. It was agreed that schools of social work should accept responsibility for teaching social work content in training other levels of social workers, such as auxiliary personnel.

However, the schools should not abandon their regular social work courses which they offer now at graduate or postgraduate level in lieu of the above, but those are over and above this course to meet the needs of the day and not a long term solution.

Many examples as to whether schools of social work at present attempt to prepare personnel for all levels of operation were given by members of the groups coming from various regions of the world. It was pointed out that most of the United States schools certainly concentrate on practitioner training and some put special emphasis on advanced work, namely, policy-making and administration. Seminars, training for auxiliary service, refresher courses are held for short periods within the year. The presumption is preparing people on the practitioner level is that experience and years in service will give leadership and skill. There are only about a dozen schools in United States which provide advanced work beyond the Master's stage; offering doctoral studies where emphasis is on administration in the broader sense, policy and decision-making and problems on the higher level of administration.

The general opinion was that in most of the Asian countries and other parts of the world, training has been for work on the practitioner level and that those who do well get to positions of leadership within a few years. Schools of social work do not train some students as leaders and others for work under them, but they give basic training and people with natural capacity for leadership learn and become leaders. Therefore, there should be provision for training in administration so that they can know beforehand about the responsibilities which they will find themselves carrying later on. In India it is desirable that there should be a combination of training for practitioners and for future administrators. The groups found that there is no one school which gives all these kinds of preparation for different levels. Most groups would rather stick pretty close to the basic training and other things will develop from experience and graduate training on the level which the work required. Any attempt to prepare people for all levels is pretty difficult.

The second question raised was whether schools of social work in countries which are in a beginning or early stage of social welfare development should establish the same priorities and give the same emphasis as schools in countries with established services. The general opinion was that the question of training priority was not rigidly adhered to in all countries, although all participants recognized a shortage of social workers in different degrees. In India, for example, there are programs which function on high levels but there is no direct relationship between professional training and the job itself. Social workers are not consciously prepared for one level of operation, and the tendency is that different graduates occupy different levels of responsibility. In the United States, the social workers' position is clearer, while in other countries such as Japan, it can not be denied that there exists some lack of understanding among government officials about social work education, especially among those who had other training such as jurisprudence or economics and among those in charge of colleges, so that trained workers do not have possibilities of getting promoted to the hierarchy of government officials. However, there seems to be no difference in principle between underdeveloped countries and the American situation, because the advanced countries also face the question that students trained in schools of social work offering a Master's degree, are primarily practitioners, since they have a shortage of practitioners. The question is, should schools do more to face the real need of preparing some students for administrative and policy-making jobs, and should we not question the United States about the orientation of students in a protective setting with agencies in the cities, so that they do not go to the rural areas, where they are needed? It was pointed out that many of the workers in the United States are not prepared to work in rural countries where they have to make decisions without the protection of supervision. This is unlike the practice in other countries. In short, we are certain that even in the advanced countries, we have not yet learned to do a very good job in teaching administration. What is happening in Asia is comparable to what took place in the United States fifty years ago. Social work training began because there were leaders who were interested in services. They drew whatever knowledge they could and tried to adopt it to the American way of life. Consequently, our problems are different in degree but basically the same. There is a difference in the word "shortage" but the fact exists that practitioners are in short supply.

Should social work schools establish priorities? The groups kept coming back to this question. Different schools have given thought to what they ought to do, but nationally they do not know. Priority so far has been given to practitioner level training which is largely justified.

It seems that this is the general trend of education. Such priority should continue and should include such courses as will interest students to move on to positions of leadership. Courses should include a broad range of administrative skills so that the students can grow into administrative responsibilities and higher positions. It was suggested that priorities should depend on the personnel and facilities available, and the goal should be that each country provide its own personnel at all levels. Every country should try to provide for its own levels of operation or make use of neighboring countries' facilities, when they are lacking in their own country.

In the case, there is a need for explaining the necessity of further training in social work. Schools of social work should encourage both the government and the agencies to send their workers in rotation to schools for regular training in advanced social work. They should explain to higher ranking officials that social service can best be administered and carried out by social workers themselves and that schools must see that prospective social workers be trained in administration and legal affairs, have experience in the field after their studies' and then return to university for further training.

It is true that technical training for social work in Asia is very new. There are few trained teachers and very very few places suitable for field training. We can not deny that there are few trained social workers in Asia, but there are many sociologists and this kind of knowledge is helpful and can be utilized for social work education.

The question as to whether training abroad is suitable for Asian countries was discussed. There was some scepticism in the groups as to whether study abroad was ever helpful. Asian students trained in the West often learn a great deal about technical social work but can not apply what they have learned abroad, when they returned to their own countries. There is also some danger in fellowships for government officials who observe different types of social work practice in various countries so that there may be conflicts or confusion when they try to implement it at home. Some participants pointed out that by study abroad, the student inbibes the spirit and philosophy behind social work and that is important. In this connection, it was suggested that if Asian students are sent abroad for training, it would be desirable to place them in special training centers where their teachers would be those with special knowledge of the cultural background from which the students come. It would also be desirable to send social workers from the more advanced countries to various regions in Asia, having first trained such teachers in cultural patterns. Such social workers would then give

inservice training in Asia.

The third question raised was whether it is possible to establish educational arrangements within the same country which would meet a variety of training needs, such as postgraduate preparation for senior level personnel, undergraduate preparation for the practitioner level, and special training courses for village level and auxiliary workers.

With regard to this, there was a discussion of the definition of "Schools of Social Work" and three kinds were mentioned as found in different countries: (1) schools offering social work on an undergraduate level with a Bachelor of Arts degree, (2) schools which offer a two year specialized undergraduate course without any degree and below professional training and (3) training for and beyond a Master's degree. These three levels would have different emphasis. The graduate school (3) would be identified with highly administrative work, teaching and research and policy-making while the undergraduate school (1) would address itself to the practitioner level, and the junior college (2) would work for the preparation of auxiliary persons in social work.

There was general agreement that before training plans are worked out, the government of country should decide what level of social work is required for what job, otherwise it will lead to confusion. It was agreed in general that there can be different levels of social workers for different types of work, varying in relation to the needs of different countries and their development.

As to the question whether there is a common core of social work knowledge and skill, which is needed by personnel at all these levels of operation, the question was raised by the groups as to what is the content of the core, even if the core of social work knowledge is the same for different types of workers.

Finally, the general opinion of members representing some of the countries where social work has not yet been established as a profession was that schools should do their best to make top government people aware of the importance of social work training. And they made the following suggestions:

- 1) that the standard of the auxiliary and low level workers should be raised, and the qualification of the workers who are admitted to take inservice training should be more strict.
- 2) that regulations should be changed to include the requirement of some social work training for workers in public agencies and also in private agencies.
- 3) that the examinations for government social work jobs should be different from the examinations for other jobs, and the examinations

should lay emphasis on testing the social work abilities of the applicant.

- 4) that schools of social work should endeavour to give advanced professional training to the students and at the same time give them enough knowledge and skill in the wider and related fields to enable them to fit also into positions in the Labor, Legislation, Welfare, and Education Ministries.
- 5) that the governmental administrative system should be improved so that professional workers can have a higher status and can have job advancements.