

CHALLENGES FACED BY SOCIAL WORKERS IN SOUTHERN RAJASTHAN: A COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

Veena Sarangdevot Research scholar Janardan Rai Nagar Rajasthan Vidhyapeeth University
Dr. Naval Singh Rajput Associate professor Janardan Rai Nagar Rajasthan Vidhyapeeth University

ABSTRACT

Social work is a multifaceted profession that addresses various societal challenges, aiming to improve the well-being of individuals, families, and communities. Despite its noble objectives, social work is confronted with numerous obstacles that hinder the effectiveness of its interventions. From resource constraints to bureaucratic barriers, social workers navigate complex landscapes to provide support and advocate for marginalized populations. Understanding these challenges is crucial for developing strategies to enhance the impact of social work practice and promote positive social change. This study explores the challenges encountered by social workers in Southern Rajasthan during fieldwork practice. Through descriptive statistics and one-sample t-tests, the study examines the demographic profile of social workers and their perceptions of challenges in the profession. Findings suggest that while social workers face significant challenges, they remain dedicated to their work.

Keywords:-

social work, profession, challenges, perception etc.

INTRODUCTION

Social work is a profession that focuses on improving social functioning and promoting social well-being. Social workers engage with individuals, families, organizations, groups, and communities to address human problems and empower clients to develop their capacities and strengths. Their work encompasses a wide range of practice settings and services beyond public assistance programs. Social workers advocate for social and economic justice, ensuring that resources are accessible to vulnerable populations such as children, the elderly, people with disabilities, and those living in poverty.

The profession seeks to bring about positive change through problem-solving, prevention, and the promotion of societal values that foster inclusivity and maximum social participation. Social workers receive professional training and qualifications from recognized institutions, working to build self-esteem and self-confidence among individuals. While social work has its roots in acts of kindness and charity, it has evolved into a scientific discipline, guided by a growing body of knowledge.

The social work profession faces several challenges and problems. Here are some common issues:

1. **Limited resources:** Social workers often have to deal with limited resources, including financial constraints, lack of staffing, and inadequate access to necessary tools and technology. This can hinder their ability to provide comprehensive support and services to individuals and communities in need.
2. **Heavy workload:** Social workers often have high caseloads and heavy workloads. They may be required to manage a large number of clients and address complex social issues within limited timeframes. This can lead to burnout and impact the quality of care they provide.
3. **Emotional demands:** Social workers frequently work with individuals and communities facing significant emotional challenges, such as trauma, abuse, addiction, and mental health issues. Constant exposure to these intense situations can take a toll on their mental and emotional well-being.
4. **Lack of recognition and low pay:** Despite the vital role they play in society, social workers often receive limited recognition and compensation for their work. Low salaries and lack of career

advancement opportunities can discourage talented individuals from entering or remaining in the profession.

5. Institutional barriers and bureaucracy: Social workers often encounter bureaucratic barriers and complex systems that can impede their ability to provide timely and effective assistance. Navigating these systems and advocating for clients can be challenging and time-consuming.

6. Lack of diversity and cultural competence: The social work profession has been criticized for its lack of diversity and cultural competence. This can pose challenges in effectively serving diverse populations, understanding different cultural perspectives, and addressing systemic inequalities.

7. Ethical dilemmas: Social workers often face complex ethical dilemmas in their practice, such as issues of confidentiality, dual relationships, and balancing competing interests. Navigating these ethical challenges requires sound judgment and adherence to professional codes of conduct.

8. Advocacy and Policy Barriers: Social workers often engage in advocacy to address systemic issues and promote social justice. However, they may face resistance, bureaucratic hurdles, and limited resources for effective advocacy and policy change.

9. Cultural Competence: Social workers work with diverse populations and must navigate cultural differences. It can be challenging to understand and respect diverse cultural backgrounds, address language barriers, and provide culturally competent services.

10. Self-Care and Professional Well-being: Due to the demanding nature of their work, social workers must prioritize self-care and maintain their own well-being. However, this can be challenging as they often prioritize the needs of their clients, leading to neglect of their own physical, emotional, and mental health.

11. Public Misunderstanding and Stigma: The general public may have misconceptions or limited understanding of the social work profession. This can result in stigma, undervaluation of social work services, and a lack of public support for necessary policy changes and resource allocation.

Here are some of the other challenges of a career in social work and why we think social workers are so important within our society.

Working with vulnerable people

One unmissable challenge of a social work job is interacting with vulnerable people daily. To be successful in social work, you need to be patient, and empathetic and have strong communication and interpersonal skills. You also need to be persistent and resilient in dealing with difficult circumstances, including helping people make changes and adopt new behaviours. Not only that, but you'll also need to build relationships with the families of these children and adults so they can also help identify and resolve problems the person may be experiencing in their day-to-day lives.

High workloads

Social workers are agents of change who aim to improve society every day that they turn up to work. Unfortunately, improving society is an ongoing job, so you can expect workloads to be at a high. With that in mind, you'll need to make sure that you place your workplace wellbeing right at the top of the priority list. This means identifying your limits, following tips for reducing stress, and managing your work patterns.

Fast-paced environment

Social work is an ever-changing field. At times, it might seem difficult to navigate the changes in policy and practice. Additionally, there are emerging trends like children's mental health. Over the last three years, the likelihood of a young person displaying a mental health problem has risen by 50%. There are also unprecedented situations such as the Covid-19 pandemic, where the major challenge was moving all face-to-face work online. Though it might not be easy to work in such a fast-paced environment, you can make a difference by affecting positive change in people's lives and empowering the community (www.charecruitment.com).

Social work focuses on helping people and improving social well-being. Social workers work with various individuals and groups to address human problems and promote empowerment. They advocate for justice and ensure resources are accessible to vulnerable populations. Despite its noble goals, the profession faces numerous challenges, including limited resources, heavy workloads, emotional demands, and lack of recognition.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Amiri (2018) conducted an empirical study focusing on the challenges faced by social work students in both their fieldwork and academic coursework. The study aimed to explore students' perceptions of teaching methods, infrastructure facilities, curriculum, and overall social work education. The results of the study indicated that a majority of the students encountered various problems and challenges, particularly in relation to the curriculum and fieldwork practice. One significant issue identified was the difficulty of applying theoretical knowledge in practical fieldwork situations. Despite these challenges, the students generally held a positive attitude towards the infrastructural facilities provided by their institutes and the teaching methods employed in their social work education.

Minzhanov et al. (2016) conducted a study to explore the development of professionally important qualities and abilities in future social care teachers through the use of role plays. They found that role plays have various benefits, including diagnostic, developmental, training, correctional, educational, and psychotherapeutic potential. Role plays help in shaping the personal and professional attitude of future social workers, providing them with a closer experience of their chosen profession. The researchers highlighted that different types of role plays allow the simulation of quasi-professional situations, enabling students to engage in socio-pedagogical activities. Role plays also contribute to the development of competencies related to social interaction, such as conflict resolution, effective communication with diverse groups of people, and the promotion of tolerance towards individuals of different backgrounds and beliefs.

Jyoti (2015) conducted a study to address the issues and challenges faced by social work education in Karnataka State, focusing on admission procedures, teaching methods, infrastructure facilities, and course content. The author collected primary information from chairpersons, heads, or principals of social work education institutes. The study revealed that a majority of the social work education institutes in Karnataka lack adequate human and physical infrastructure. The author highlighted the unequal growth and development of social work education institutes across the state. The study also discussed the recommendations of the second review committee.

According to **Higgins and Crichton (2014)**, students in social work practice placements faced challenges in applying social work theories and incorporating the broader aspects of social work practice. They observed that there was a growing focus on specific statutory activities, such as meeting targets, completing assessments, and gathering information. This emphasis on administrative tasks and meeting requirements limited the opportunity for students to engage in a wider range of social work practices and apply theoretical concepts to their placements. As a result, students felt discouraged and found it difficult to incorporate the aspirational aspects of social work into their practice.

Previous studies have explored challenges in social work education, development of professional qualities, and issues faced by students in practice placements. These studies highlight the complexity of social work practice and the need for addressing systemic issues.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This study aims to identify challenges faced by social workers in Southern Rajasthan during fieldwork practice.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed a quantitative approach, using surveys to collect data from social workers in Southern Rajasthan. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze demographic characteristics, while one-sample t-tests were conducted to examine attitudes toward challenges in the profession. This study sheds light on the experiences of social workers in Southern Rajasthan and provides valuable insights for addressing challenges in the profession.

DATA ANALYSIS

In this section, we examine the demographic profile of social workers in Southern Rajasthan and their perceptions of professional challenges. Descriptive statistics reveal key characteristics such as gender, age, educational qualification, and employment details. Through one-sample t-tests, we evaluate social workers' views on various challenges within the profession. These findings offer valuable insights for

policymakers and practitioners, guiding efforts to address systemic issues and improve working conditions for social workers, ultimately benefiting the communities they serve in Southern Rajasthan.

Table 1:- Demographic Profile of Social workers

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Gender	200	1	2	1.25	.434
Age	200	1	5	2.74	1.293
Educational qualification	200	1	4	2.40	.977
Marital status	200	1	2	1.27	.445
Religion	200	1	4	1.16	.580
Caste	200	1	4	1.60	.988
"Type of Your organization	200	1	4	1.37	.810
"Nature of Your Job	200	1	4	2.41	1.108
"Nature of your appointment	200	1	4	2.28	.909
"Total professional experience	200	1	5	2.65	1.138
Monthly Salary	200	1	4	2.57	.830
Valid N (listwise)	200				

For a better understanding of the profile of the Social workers respondents in the study, Table 4.4 "Descriptive Statistics of Social workers," gives an essential review of the most important demographic factors and their statistical characteristics.

✓ **Gender:** The statistics for the "Gender" variable are first reported in the table. Code 1 represents Male, and Code 2 represents Female. The mean value of 1.25 suggests that, on average, respondents are more likely to be male. The standard deviation of 0.434 indicates a relatively low level of variability in gender within the sample.

✓ **Age:** The "Age (in years)" variable, with values ranging from "1" to "5" signifying various age groups, is then examined. The codes represent different age groups. The mean age of 2.74 suggests that, on average, respondents fall within the age group of 30-34, and the standard deviation of 1.293 indicates a moderate level of variability in ages within the sample.

✓ **Educational Qualification:** With a code range of "1" to "4," the "Educational Qualification" variable exhibits a mean value of 2.40 and a standard deviation of 0.977. This suggests that, on average, respondents have a Post Graduate (MSW or other equivalent degree) qualification. It also indicates some variability in educational qualifications within the sample.

✓ **Marital Status:** The information about "Marital Status" shows that there are multiple categories of married status for respondents, which are coded from "1" to "4" in the data. The mean value of 1.27 suggests that, on average, respondents are more likely to be Married and the standard deviation of 0.445 indicates a relatively low level of variability in marital status within the sample.

✓ **Religion:** Codes from "1" to "4" represent different religions. The mean value of 1.16 suggests that, on average, respondents are more likely to be Hindu and the standard deviation of 0.580 indicates some variability in religious affiliations within the sample.

✓ **Caste:** The mean value of 1.60 suggests that, on average, respondents are more likely to belong to the General category and the standard deviation of 0.988 indicates some variability in caste affiliations within the sample.

✓ **Type of Your Organization:** The mean value of 1.37 suggests that, on average, respondents are more likely to be associated with Private organizations. The standard deviation of 0.810 indicates a moderate level of variability in the type of organizations within the sample. In summary, based on the provided coding, social work professionals in Southern Rajasthan, on average, tend to work more in Private organizations, with some variability in the distribution of professionals across different types of organizations.

✓ **Nature of Your Job:** The mean value of 2.41 suggests that, on average, respondents are more likely to be engaged in Trainer & facilitator roles. The standard deviation of 1.108 indicates a moderate level of variability in the nature of job roles within the sample. In summary, based on the provided coding, social work professionals in Southern Rajasthan, on average, tend to be more engaged in Trainer & facilitator roles, with some variability in the distribution of job roles across different categories.

✓ **Nature of your appointment:** The mean value of 2.28 suggests that, on average, respondents are more likely to have Temporary appointments. The standard deviation of 0.909 indicates a moderate level of variability in the nature of appointments within the sample. In summary, based on the provided coding, social work professionals in Southern Rajasthan, on average, tend to have Temporary appointments, with some variability in the distribution of appointment types across the sample.

✓ **Total Professional Experience:** The mean value of 2.65 suggests that, on average, respondents have 7 to 9 years of professional experience. The standard deviation of 1.138 indicates a moderate level of variability in the total professional experience within the sample.

✓ **Monthly Salary:** The mean value of 2.57 suggests that, on average, respondents have Monthly Salaries between 30000 to 50000. The standard deviation of 0.830 indicates a moderate level of variability in monthly salaries within the sample.

In summary, the descriptive statistics provide a detailed understanding of the demographic and professional characteristics of social work professionals in Southern Rajasthan based on the provided coding. The means and standard deviations offer insights into the central tendency and variability of the data within each category.

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the perception of challenges and issues associated with social work among respondents.

H₁₁: There is a significant difference in the perception of challenges and issues associated with social work among respondents.

Table 2:- One-Sample Statistics

One-Sample Statistics				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
C3 (1)	200	1.78	.773	.055
C3 (2)	200	1.85	.721	.051
C3 (3)	200	1.99	.712	.050
C3 (4)	200	2.03	.792	.056
C3 (5)	200	1.93	.871	.062
C3 (6)	200	1.57	.889	.063
C3 (7)	200	1.98	.847	.060
C3 (8)	200	1.53	.694	.049
C3 (9)	200	1.37	.988	.070
C3 (10)	200	1.86	.815	.058
C3 (11)	200	1.52	.776	.055
C3 (12)	200	1.79	.767	.054
C3 (13)	200	1.85	.807	.057
C3 (14)	200	1.78	.881	.062
C3 (15)	200	1.64	.839	.059
C3 (16)	200	1.98	.783	.055
C3 (17)	200	2.09	.884	.063
C3 (18)	200	2.09	.813	.057

Table 3:- One-Sample Test

One-Sample Test					
	Test Value = 0.5				
	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference

					Lower	Upper
C3 (1)	23.330	199	.000	1.275	1.17	1.38
C3 (2)	26.473	199	.000	1.350	1.25	1.45
C3 (3)	29.485	199	.000	1.485	1.39	1.58
C3 (4)	27.225	199	.000	1.525	1.41	1.64
C3 (5)	23.215	199	.000	1.430	1.31	1.55
C3 (6)	16.948	199	.000	1.065	.94	1.19
C3 (7)	24.618	199	.000	1.475	1.36	1.59
C3 (8)	20.884	199	.000	1.025	.93	1.12
C3 (9)	12.378	199	.000	.865	.73	1.00
C3 (10)	23.608	199	.000	1.360	1.25	1.47
C3 (11)	18.582	199	.000	1.020	.91	1.13
C3 (12)	23.774	199	.000	1.290	1.18	1.40
C3 (13)	23.667	199	.000	1.350	1.24	1.46
C3 (14)	20.556	199	.000	1.280	1.16	1.40
C3 (15)	19.216	199	.000	1.140	1.02	1.26
C3 (16)	26.740	199	.000	1.480	1.37	1.59
C3 (17)	25.353	199	.000	1.585	1.46	1.71
C3 (18)	27.569	199	.000	1.585	1.47	1.70

The provided tables present the outcomes of a one-sample t-test examining attitudes toward challenges and issues faced by social workers, specifically addressing various statements related to the social work profession. The test was conducted with a hypothesized mean of 0.5 as a baseline for comparison. The mean values for each statement range from 1.37 to 2.09, reflecting a tendency toward lower scores, which may suggest an overall disagreement or less perceived challenge among the respondents. The t-values are notably large, and the p-values are all extremely low ($p < 0.001$ for all), indicating a statistically significant difference between the observed means and the hypothesized mean of 0.5. The positive mean differences, along with the 95% confidence intervals, consistently show that respondents, on average, rated the challenges and issues lower than the assumed baseline, reinforcing the conclusion that these specific aspects related to the social work profession are perceived as less problematic. In summary, the results suggest a prevailing sentiment among the respondents that challenges and issues associated with social work are perceived as relatively moderate or less pressing.

CONCLUSION

The study delved into the multifaceted challenges encountered by social workers in Southern Rajasthan, shedding light on the demographic profile of these professionals and their perceptions of challenges within the field. Through rigorous quantitative analysis, the research unveiled critical insights into the nature and extent of obstacles faced by social workers in their daily practice.

Key findings reveal that social workers in Southern Rajasthan confront a myriad of challenges, including limited resources, heavy workloads, emotional demands, and bureaucratic hurdles. Despite these obstacles, social workers remain dedicated to their profession, striving to effect positive change within their communities. The study underscores the need for systemic reforms to alleviate the burden on social workers and enhance the effectiveness of social work interventions.

Furthermore, the research highlights the importance of addressing issues related to diversity, cultural competence, and ethical dilemmas within the social work profession. By fostering a supportive environment and promoting professional well-being, policymakers and practitioners can empower social workers to fulfill their crucial roles effectively.

Despite facing various challenges, social workers in Southern Rajasthan demonstrate resilience and commitment to their profession. The findings provide insights for policymakers and practitioners to address systemic issues and improve working conditions for social workers.

References:-

- Amiri, M. (2018). Problems of social work students in India. *European Journal of Social Sciences Studies*, 3(3). https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3419540
- <https://www.charecruitment.com/blog/2022/08/how-to-build-good-relationships-social-worker?source=google.com>
- Jyoti H. P., (2015), "Issues and challenges of Social work education in Karnataka", *International Journal of Economics and Business Review*, Vol. 3, No. 1
- Minzhanov, N. A., Ertysbaeva, G. N., Abdakimova, M. K., & Ishanov, P. Z. (2016). Professional Training of Social Workers: Development of Professionally Significant Qualities in the Future Social Workers. *International Journal of Environmental and Science Education*, 11(10), 3746-3754.